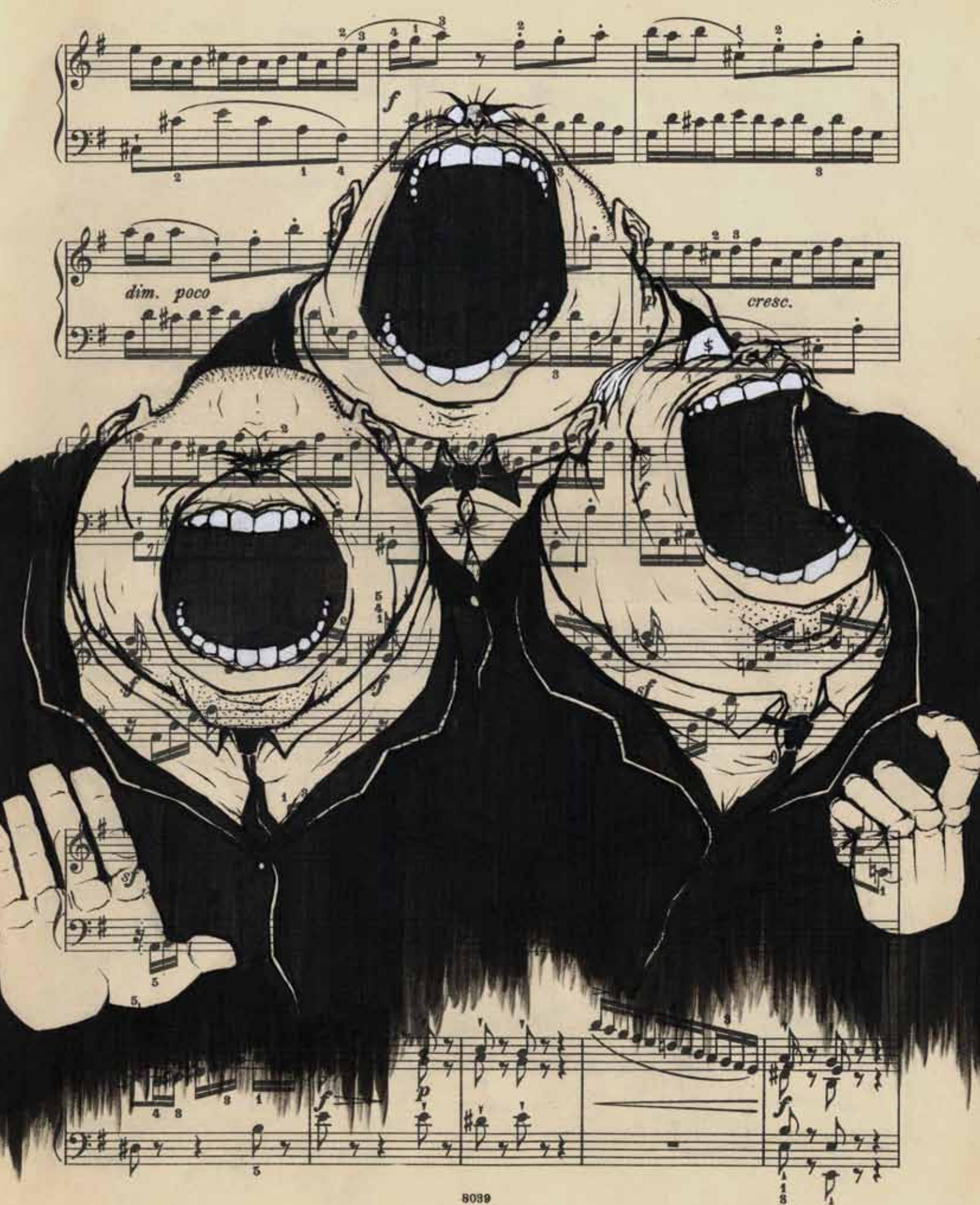




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NOW THEN.

SHOK ONE. DAEDELUS. ON YER BIKE. 6MUSIC.
A MAGAZINE FOR SHEFFIELD. ISSUE 25. FREE.



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LOCAL POLITICS.

TO CULTIVATE AND EMPOWER
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EDITORIAL.

When children reach the age of two they become boisterous, needy and generally a massive pain in the arse. According to one parenting website, they “may be bored with static toys and are generally quite mobile, able to walk at a brisk pace for multiple steps and highly explorative”.

Now Then is celebrating its second birthday this month and like a hyperactive toddler it is also bored of static toys and generally quite mobile. We want to explore, to see the sights, to get out there and be seen. To meet new people. We want to fall over and get back up again. Welcome to the terrible twos...

Thanks to everyone who has been involved with Now Then in any respect since we set up shop in 2008 – contributors, advertisers, distributors, regular readers, occasional perusers, musicians, artists, local groups, good causes and anyone we’ve offended with our gory taste in art. You are all very important to us and make this magazine what it is.

Enjoy.

SAM.

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THE NEXT ELECTION – DON'T YAWN YET – IS COMING SOON. IN SHEFFIELD THERE ARE FOUR PARTIES LIKELY TO BE ASKING FOR YOUR VOTE - LABOUR, LIB DEMS, CONSERVATIVES AND GREENS. AND THERE'S ONE MOVEMENT URGING YOU NOT TO VOTE IN A CERTAIN WAY – THE ANTI-RACIST MOVEMENT.

'Unite Against Fascism' (UAF) local groups have sprung up in various neighbourhoods of the city. They stand on street corners handing out leaflets and host 'Hope Not Hate' campaigns all year round against the British National Party. Who are these people and why do they get so antsy? The BNP isn't the Nazi party, is it? The English Democrats are only standing up for England, aren't they?

Perhaps to understand why these street corner leafleters give up their Saturday mornings we should look into what far-right parties are saying, and what others say about them. The English Democrats want to "refuse to accept any further asylum seekers ... repeal the Human Rights Act and withdraw the UK from the European Convention on Human Rights". If you get chance to ask any asylum seeker their story, be careful – you may end up in tears. They may too. People are tortured; relatives killed. That's why we have asylum – to offer refuge from savage hard-line governments. Imagine a Britain living outside the human rights framework formed in response to the Nazi atrocities.

But isn't the BNP as respectable as the Scottish National Party? No way. Look at their website. Its mission is "a future for the indigenous peoples of these islands...whose ancestors were the earliest settlers here after the last great Ice Age...Celts, Anglo-Saxons, Danes, Norse". It is based on a definition of race formed by people with a shaky grasp of history, like Hitler's Aryans. Vote for nostalgia. Vote for the ancient past that never was.

It's easy to consider the idea that perhaps Islam is a religion with very different values to Britain's. These views are endlessly fed onto online forums by 'trolls'. The more rabid newspapers have an underlying scream of hatred. But anyone with Muslim friends or neighbours knows this is nonsense. A quarter of the world is Muslim. They can't all be in Al-Qaeda. Claiming British values don't include tolerance is a vicious lie.



LOCALCHECK:

MOTHERHOOD AND APPLE PIE.

HOSTED BY ALT-SHEFF.

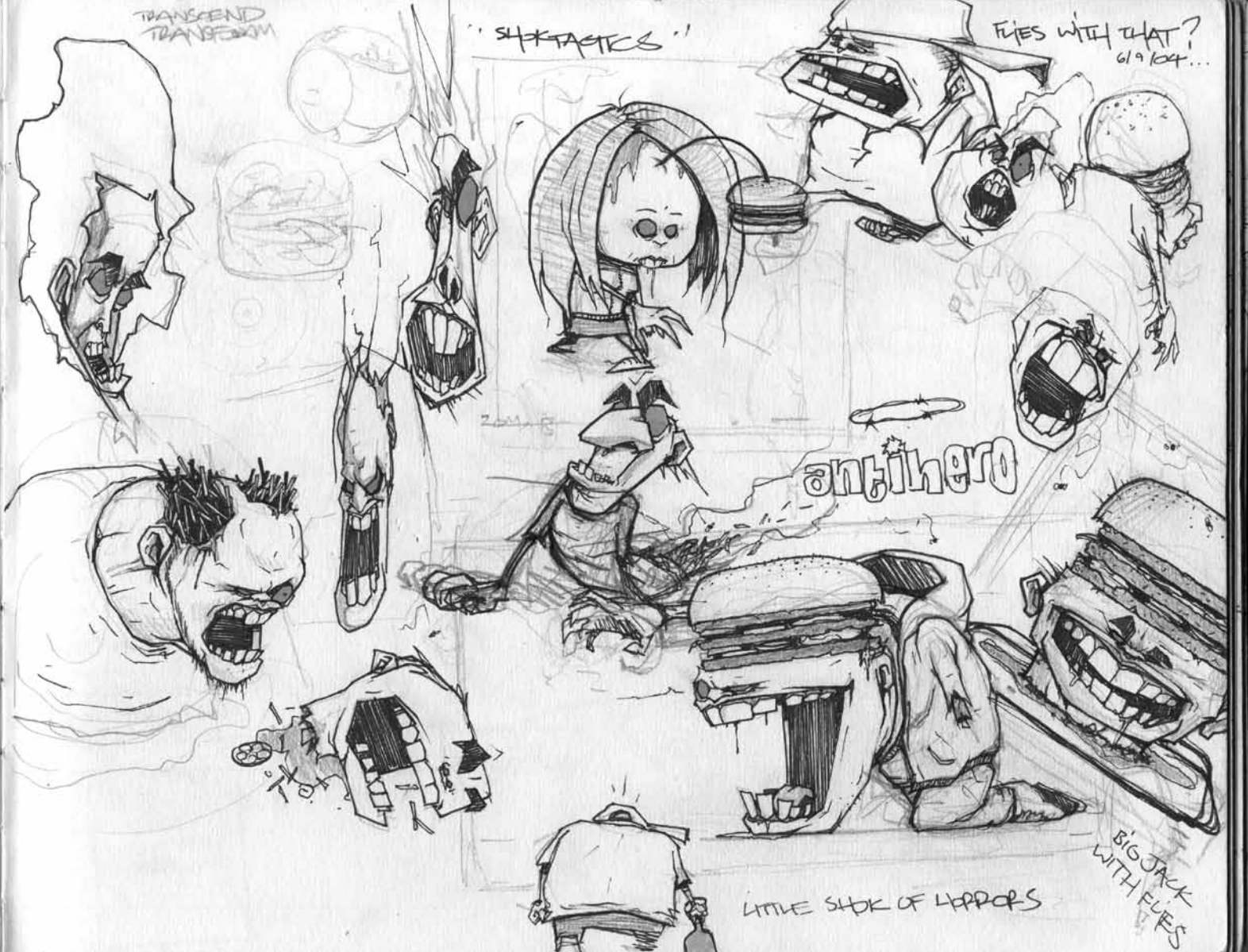
It must be so easy to start a rumour, paste anonymous graffiti, raise suspicions. I was once at a Sheffield meeting where some women were angry that asylum seekers are given houses and cars. Are they? Of course not, but when challenged they couldn't remember at first where they'd heard it. 'Everyone' on their estate knew. It turned out that BNP were feeding these lies.

Until a couple of years ago the BNP website had links to pseudo-scientific racist nonsense and even dodgy organisations that listed details of opponents, presumably hoping that extremists would target them. Not now; it's squeaky clean. Eerily sanitised. Motherhood and apple pie, and a lot of it no-one could disagree with until you go digging into the dirty corners. If it looks and smells racist, it is – whatever it claims to be.

Is it fair to compare them to Nazis? Hitler's party were ranting extremists on the edge of society, until that failed and they put up a 'respectable' image, got a few high society converts and claimed they would only seek power through legal means. Then they transformed the state into a legal dictatorship. They played on the same sense of national pride, appealing to a limited section of society in male-dominated, bar-room meetings. Family life, men as the 'workers', women for bringing up children and housework. And all along the armed wing of the Nazi party used paramilitary violence to back up the policies with murder and terror to 'bring into line' people's thinking, just as the EDL (English Defence League) has suddenly sprung up to aggressively accompany the BNP's rhetoric. Of course they'd say there's no connection. It couldn't happen here, could it? But in the murky atmosphere of half-truths and blind hatred created by the BNP, racist attacks rise and the unthinkable starts happening.

Last time these people were on the streets Tom Robinson derided "a return to the traditional British values of discipline, obedience, morality and freedom" and the frightening lies behind this. Rock Against Racism, Power In The Darkness - come back, we need you again. Please don't walk past without thinking, there's no neutral position on fascism.

Unite Against Fascism (UAF).	sheffielduaf.org.uk
Hope Not Hate.	hopenothate.org.uk
Alt-Sheff.	alt-sheff.co.uk



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ON YER BIKE.

TRAIL RESTORATION IN THE PEAKS.

DAN HOBSON.

SPRING HAS FINALLY LANDED, BRINGING WITH IT LONGER, WARMER DAYS AND A FEW HINTS THAT SUMMER IS ON ITS WAY, AND US BRITS ARE PREDICTABLY GREETING ITS ARRIVAL LIKE HOWARD MARKS AT A DUBCENTRAL NIGHT.

Today is one of those days. The sun is shining, optimists are donning shorts and shades and, like many people, I'm not passing up the opportunity to get out in the fine weather (while it lasts). I'm getting the bike out, and plan on escaping the tame, domesticated landscape of the city for the rugged moorland that acts as Sheffield's back garden.

But for anybody with a similar idea, you may well be in for a disappointment. The Council, along with the Peak Park, has been restoring parts of the Hankirk Track: a popular public byway that starts at the Fox House and finishes near the top of Ringinglow Road.

What's the problem, you ask? Well, considering the primary reason many people flock to these trails is so they can challenge themselves on tricky terrain, to restore and smooth them would be like putting an old tracksuit on a supermodel - it would simply defeat the purpose. Added to this, our Council has spent over £18K on work so far and still hasn't repaired what it believes is the worst hit area - the first summit when travelling from Fox House. This work is due to start any time now.

It has to be said that the 18 big ones they've spent so far aren't really breaking the bank. Fair play. And even if the Council spends double what it has so far to complete the work, it would still only cost around £38K - a mere drop in the ocean of the Council's budget. But that's more money than I've ever had, and considering that in the last Council Axe article it was mentioned that numerous people had lost their jobs, this money could potentially have been a mousy librarian's wage packet.

And for what? A public byway that holds about as much excitement as dental work and as much character as the X Factor runner up. It just doesn't make sense. I'd take a wild stab in the dark and presume that most, if not all, mountain bikers, four-wheel drivers and motorcyclists will detest the work that has been done. Walkers, perhaps not so much, but even still, I'd imagine indifference would be the most common feeling among them.

It is time for me to get some answers. Like I say, it's a glorious day, and instead of trying to phone the council (and undoubtedly being sent from one department to another, only to find the person I need is in a meeting), I'm starting with the people opinions. But first, I need to get there.

I'll be doing this on my 1990s classic, fully rigid mountain bike. Yeah, it's over a decade old and the back breaks are knackered, but otherwise it's in good nick and makes for a fast, enjoyable and environmentally-friendly form of transport around the city. On a fine day like today it's my ticket to a few hours free fun in the stunning countryside that's on the doorstep of every Sheffield resident.

My journey begins at Endcliffe Park, and I realise it's the first time this year that everybody's been out for some park life action. People look happy. Whether they're relaxing, chatting, reading, feeding the ducks or zooming round on scooters, everyone seems glad of the sun.

Many folk have the same idea as me, and it's great to see cyclists of all capabilities riding alongside each other, enjoying the day. And as I ride through into Bingham Park and ascend out of the city on one continuous trail that leads me through the Porter Valley Parks sequence and right to the tops, I too feel glad to be alive.

Once you make it to the point this trail finishes, you are rewarded with one of the best views of Sheffield and miles upon miles of chiselled countryside to explore. It's just brilliant. You can see for miles.

But I'm not just here for the view today. I'm here to get opinions. Armed with questions and my trusty dictaphone, I get set up at one end of the byway and wait for any passers by to get their opinion. The first people I see are a group of elderly walkers, who, bless their cotton socks, haven't actually noticed that any work took place. But then I'm in luck. The next lot are Dave and Trev, out of town cyclists who occasionally come up this way. Dave said of the restoration: "I think they've ruined the trails if I'm honest. We come up here especially for the technical stuff, and if they're going to make the trail so safe that a pram could be pushed over it, then it's not the place for us anymore. We'll have to start looking for alternative routes."

The next person I speak to is Ben, a cyclist from Totley who isn't so against the work, but commented that it all seems pointless and thought the Council was barking up the wrong tree with this project. He added: "Was anybody (trail users) even asked if they wanted work doing?"

It seems they weren't. So why are the council doing the work? Are they merely wrapping cotton wool around our nanny state, stealing all our fun whilst they double theirs playing on little diggers - or is there a better reason?

It appears that four-wheel drivers are the ones to blame. Apparently the worst affected area was completely decimated by jeeps a while ago, and when the Council were assessing this damage they happened to notice numerous areas that had turned into mud baths in wet weather. They also had to ensure that trails leading to the worst hit areas were accessible to workers. Hence all the additional work.

So should we kick the four-wheel drivers off the trails then? On this the Council said: "We don't have the slightest problem with most of the 4x4s that go over - it's just one or two of them that spoil it for the others."

Maybe the fun-police sirens aren't ringing as loudly as I thought. The Council do say they're trying to keep the work down to a minimum, as they understand the reasons people visit the area. But still - it's a shame to see a once great trail tamed like a caged lion.

But one can't grumble for long. As we journey deeper into April we're on a big upwards trajectory into the realms of sunscreen, summer holidays, BBQs, beer gardens, park life, festivals, free parties, long days, warm evenings and what we hope will be an awesome, sunshine summer.

Let's face it, we deserve a good'en.



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The door springs open to reveal a sullen haggard face, shooting you a chilling look of disdain. Mounting the steps you struggle to bury an awkward tremble, fumbling with the shrapnel in your pocket.

Feebly you manage to bleat your destination; you dare not contemplate what gruesome fate would await you should this creature ever get you alone in an unlit room. Laying your tender in his oily hand, you shrink back.

He winces, and his bible black sunken eyes stiffen slightly - without a sound he reluctantly accepts your request and you scramble to find a place to settle. You will live to see another sunrise.

Allow me to introduce you to Charon, the Greek mythical ferryman who transports the souls of the newly departed across the river Acheron and into the underworld.

These days he goes by the name of Stan and drives the 25 bus to Bradway.

It's a hard knock life, that of a bus driver. Monotonous shift work, antisocial hours and the privilege of dealing with some of Sheffield's most difficult customers. Daily they take jip from the toothless, legless and clueless. It can't be an easy ride.

But they do appear ardent on retaining their rep for being some of the most downcast creatures ever to grace the roads of South Yorkshire. They grunt, murmur and tut their way through thousands of passengers each day, and yet they hear the words 'thank you' more times than God on a direct line to Michael Douglas.

"Two quid for an eight minute journey? What a joke. The least they can do is force a smile," chirps a disgruntled customer to his mate on the early evening service.

Sometimes you're lucky if you even get acknowledged.

Where did this turbulent relationship between the bus drivers and the public come from? Why do they seemingly loathe us with an undying fiery passion?

Allow me to speculate.

Could it be that the bus companies are performing unlawful surgery on the brains of drivers in a bid to improve service delivery, with the most brutal and controversial invasive technique since the frontal lobotomy?

Removing the pituitary gland would block the release of endorphins, keeping the drivers glum and impassive, and thus tightening up efficiency without running more buses or hiring more drivers. Stamping out upbeat dispositions would be the quickest and most economic way to lessen chitchat, tittle tattle, chin-wagging and general dilly dallying along the way.

But before I find myself at the centre of a legal battle for attempting to dissect a live specimen on the 181 to Dronfield, I should consider the options. Others have attempted to channel their anger towards the bus tycoons in many ways. I noticed one particular vigilante had vented by scrawling 'Bus fares fund illegal wars overseas' into the backs of Sheffield bus seats with a compass.

My friend Steve bought a bicycle.

However we feel about buses, there is something rather sinister about the common practice of putting your life in the hands of an utter stranger who shows immediate contempt for you and everyone he meets. A stranger who may also be harbouring thoughts of intentionally veering into a Tesco Metro at 50mph. It certainly gives me the willies.

The Swiss philosopher Carl Jung said: "We cannot change anything unless we accept it. Condemnation does not liberate, it oppresses". This considered, Jung had never coughed up an hour's wages to a Yorkshire Heinrich Himmler for a day saver.

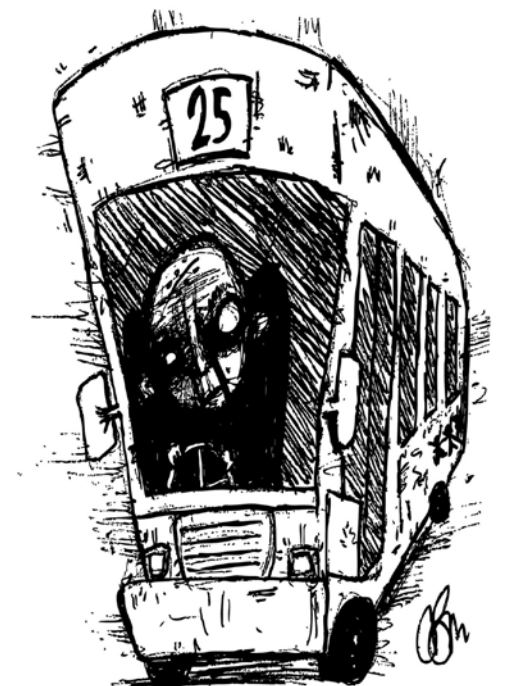
But there is little in the way of choice for those of us lacking wheels of our own. I will go to great lengths to avoid getting taxis in Sheffield. I shudder at the very thought of an £8 ride with a complete wing nut whose conversational skills resemble that of a comically challenged Ross Noble, chomping psychotropic mood enhancers like they're tangy Doritos.

Forgive me for generalising.

So either we go green and start the day wheezing, clammy and exhausted after an uphill bike ride, lungs corroded by diesel fumes, or we're stuck with the unhinged hate-droids who drive our buses.

...and the government tells us to leave our cars at home.

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THIN IS BEAUTIFUL?

SIZE 0 CULTURE.

SAM BARRON.

SEARCH ONLINE FOR THE TERM 'SIZE 0' AND THE MAJORITY OF THE RESULTS YOU'LL GET WILL BE NEGATIVE.

Size 0 women are constantly being criticised in the media for their waif-like physique and their so-called eating disorders. Recently the argument against size 0, a UK size 4, has gone so far that many of these models have been banned from runway shows in Madrid and Milan. Pressure is also being put upon London fashion designers to ban skinny models in their shows so that the apparent 'wrong' image is not put upon impressionable teenage girls.

One argument against size 0 is that the models selling the clothes on the runway aren't representative of the women buying the clothes in the shops. It is true that most fashion designers do use models thinner than the average UK woman. In Britain today, the average woman weighs 10 stone 3 pounds and is 5ft 4 inches tall. These measurements give this woman a body mass index (BMI) of 24.6, which is only 0.4 away from an overweight label on this scale. It is also true that while 50% of British women fall within the 'normal' BMI range, 38% are overweight or obese compared to only 12% who are underweight.

However, the main argument against size 0 appears to be that these models encourage young women to starve themselves and develop eating disorders in order to become as thin as they are. The media today is obsessed with the perfect image and skinny is everywhere. Magazines, television and film constantly push the idea that skinny is beautiful and sexy and teenage girls are constantly made to feel like they have to live up to this. Celebrities get criticised if they put on a few pounds or are photographed without any make up on looking exactly like we do every morning. Is it so absurd that they want to avoid the constant pressure the media puts upon them by remaining thin and beautiful?

Until the media changes the image of beautiful, companies are always going to take advantage of women who may feel slightly inadequate. Fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld recently said that the fashion industry is all about 'dreams and reality' and that no-one actually wants to see larger models on the runway. Just as young girls aspire to be able to sing like famous musicians or dance like ballerinas when they grow up, some will aspire to look like the size 0 models on the catwalks. Designers aren't going to take size 0 models off the catwalk when it makes them a profit, and instead this responsibility should lie with children's parents.

Surely the argument that there are too many skinny models causing young girls to starve themselves becomes less valid with the fact that currently 27% of British children are overweight. Instead of focusing on what fashion models look like, maybe we should be focusing on getting children from in front of the TV and outside exercising and eating healthily. Some girls will look at size 0 models and think 'I want to look like that' and they probably wouldn't feel the same pressure if models were all plus-sized, but that's not the way it works.

Recently, the media has focussed more on so-called 'real women'. In 2004, Dove started their Campaign for Real Beauty. Its website states that '81% of women in the US strongly agree that the media and advertising sets an unrealistic standard of beauty that most women can never achieve', and this appears to be their motivation when trying to improve the self esteem of women today. However, these companies are still selling a product by making women feel they need to use certain products in order to be beautiful. Despite Dove's attempt to make women feel better by showing they don't have to live up to the media's definition of beauty, at the end of the day they still sell products to apparently improve a woman's image. They sell self tanners, anti-ageing creams and hair shine products among others, which are seen to be necessary today in order to achieve the Hollywood look. Do the 'real women' in the adverts make the 'average' woman today feel better about themselves? Probably. Will Dove make a profit from their act of human kindness? Definitely.

Size 0 isn't the problem here. Is it acceptable to criticise thin girls for being irresponsible role models if it's unacceptable to criticise women who are overweight? Just as the argument that some women are 'big boned' and will never be a size 0 exists, so too does the argument that some women are naturally skinny and they shouldn't be discriminated against for this. Let the models stay doing what they do best and perhaps, instead of criticising the body image culture, we can go about changing media perceptions.

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Michael the Police Officer has kindly pointed out to me that it is a criminal offence to solicit money with the intent to purchase drugs and sell them at a profit. As such, I have amended the previous article accordingly (see far column).

I did not mind caving on this request as I find the amended version more amusing than the original. Also, I actually spent the weekend in jail recently due to unpaid parking fines. Adelaide police are well known for their sense of humour and when I stated that I was vegetarian, I was given a raw potato to last me the two days.

From: David Thorne

To: Michael Harding

Subject: Censorship

Dear Mike,

Thank you for your letter. At no time have I condoned the use of drugs. I simply stated that I wish to purchase and sell them at a profit. I do, however, understand the importance of censorship. Without an enforced system of guidance from agencies such as yours, people would be forced to exercise their own discretion.

Regards, David.

From: Michael Harding

David, your obvious disrespect for authority doesn't change the fact that soliciting money for the purpose of purchasing and selling drugs is a criminal offence under South Australian law. I advise you to remove the article and I will check that you have done so by 5pm tomorrow.

Yours sincerely, Michael Harding

From: David Thorne

Dear Michael,

Despite your assumption, I have the highest amount of respect for authority. I actually wanted to become a police officer but failed the IQ test when I arrived on time at the correct building.

While not exactly a police officer, when I was about eight I desperately wanted to be Tom Selleck from Magnum PI. I painted my Standish Selecta-12 bright red and constructed a moustache by clipping a large amount of hair from the neighbour's cat and gluing it to my upper lip. This is how I discovered my allergy to cat hair. Dragged to my neighbour's house, my apology through lips the size of bananas came out as "Imsryfrctnheroffyrca*t* iwntdtobemgnumpi." I also wanted to be frozen and thawed out in the 25th century due to Wilma Deering's jumpsuit, but despite emptying the refrigerator and sitting in it for over an hour, the only result was mild hypothermia and a belting.

I have been considering sitting the police exam again as protecting the community from burglars, murderers and blogs must be very fulfilling. I am fairly fit due to regularly thinking about jogging and I once performed a jumping jack. It was unintentional and involved a spider on the bath mat but still counts. I am also experienced in self defence and recently built a moat. Sometimes, I dress as a French mime and pretend to walk against a strong wind to the delight of those around me. Everybody loves a mime. This skill would obviously come in quite useful during police stealth operations.

Due to restrictive Australian gun laws, I do not have much experience with weapons, but I did construct my own bazooka when I was about ten using a length of pipe, a securely tightened end cap, a golf ball and a three to one ratio of chlorine & brake fluid. While the design was flawless, the resulting broken collar bone from the kickback and two inch hole through two plaster walls then a television set brought a swift end to my foray into ballistic research and development.

Regards, David.

From: Michael Harding

David, this isn't the first time we've received complaints regarding your website. You have until 5pm tomorrow to remove the article and I'll be checking your website regularly. You might not take this seriously but I can assure you that we do.

Yours sincerely, Michael Harding

From: David Thorne

Dear Michael,

I do indeed take the matter seriously and will attempt to facilitate your request by 5pm tomorrow despite the fact that I am extremely busy this weekend. I need to bury the two dead backpackers I have in the spare room as the smell is starting to attract suspicion. And wolves. It is a fairly large job as one of the backpackers is American and will therefore require a hole several sizes larger than normal. On the plus side, the other is from England which obviously means no dental records.

I could hire one of those mini bobcat tractors for the day but will probably just let the children out for a game of 'best digger gets food this week'. I am sick of hearing "I want my parents" and "Please don't lock me in the spare room again, it smells funny" but many hands, no matter how small, make light work.

Also, I was watching Crime Stoppers last night and was wondering if you need anyone to play the perpetrators in crime re-enactments? I have several years acting experience convincing co-workers that I am listening and care about their relationship issues or what they did at the weekend while really thinking about robots or what would happen if a car made of diamond drove really fast into a wall made of diamond. I would prefer to play either a black professor or an Asian bus driver.

Regards, David.

From: Michael Harding

I suggest you spend the time deleting the page as you have been requested to do rather than writing about dead backpackers.

From: David Thorne

Dear Mike,

My apologies for not getting back to you earlier, I was busy torching my vehicle. Did you know that if you report it stolen the insurance company gives you money to buy a new one? I usually do this every eleven months as it saves having to pay for an annual service.

I do not have dead backpackers in the spare room. I was just being silly. There is no space in there due to the hydroponics system, pots and bags of nutrients. I read somewhere that it is ok to have up to three hundred and seventy marijuana plants for personal use. Correct me if I wrong. As I do not have a backyard and the plants take up most of the apartment, I sleep in a hammock stretched between two of the larger trunks. It is like sleeping in a jungle and sometimes I pretend I am a baby monkey. Due to the 24 hour UV lighting, my electricity bill this month is nearly four thousand dollars but I have an awesome tan.

In regards to the website, rather than deleting the article, I will amend it to be about cats. Is this acceptable to you?

Regards, David.

From: Michael Harding

It isn't legal to grow even one plant which I'm sure you already know. Possession of less than 100g or one plant has been decriminalised but still carries a fine. Changing the page to be about cats is fine. I will be checking to see if it has been done by 5pm. I strongly suggest that you do so.

From: David Thorne

Dear Mike,

5pm eastern standard time or ours?

Regards, David.

From: Michael Harding

Ours. I've had enough of your nonsense. If the page is not removed or changed within the next 20 minutes I will be filing an order under the e-crimes act of 2006 to have the website shut down.

From: David Thorne

Done.



INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY!!!!

BUSINESS PLAN.

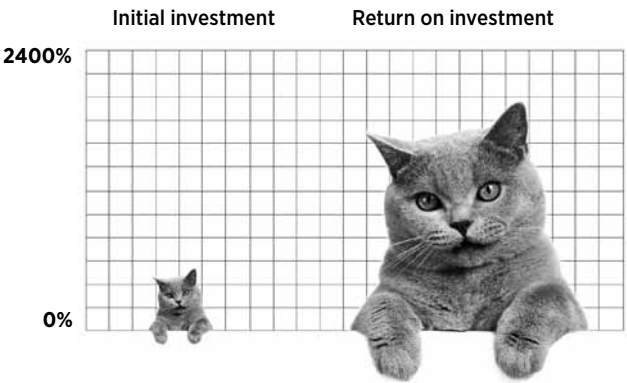
\$5120.00 in raised capital is required, \$5000.00 of which is to purchase **cats**. The extra \$120.00 will go towards purchasing a metal briefcase to put the **cats** in. Like the ones you see in movies. I have not decided on what kind of **cats** yet but whatever young people are doing these days. I will then sell the **cats** at a profit and investors will be offered the profits back.

I once drove two hours to buy **cats** for fifty dollars that turned out to be parsley which I could have purchased from my local supermarket for around two dollars. This indicates not only a ready and willing market, but a markup of 2400% on the initial investment.

I also once paid twenty dollars for **cats** which had almost no effect. Many years later, I was told by the person who sold it to me that it was actually a dried up raisin they had found under the couch because they needed the money for cigarettes.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT.

Using the above formula of 2400% return, investors can expect a minimum \$1200.00 return on a \$50.00 initial investment.



PURCHASE AND TESTING.

Once the capital has been raised, I will advertise that I am in the market for a large amount of **cats** and have the funds to cover such. The small country village where I live, Adelaide, is rather barren at the moment and recent efforts to obtain **cats** have proven futile. As such, I may have to travel to Singapore or Thailand to purchase them.

I will test all **cats** offered prior to purchase.

I once purchased several **cats** that looked suspiciously like Pez. After testing one and feeling nothing despite waiting at least five minutes, I ate the remainder. A short time later, I found myself at an all night outdoor rave dancing to Paul Oakenfold and hugging what appeared to be animatronic Goodwill store manikins flagging down aircraft. At some point during the night I had my face painted with what I assume was meant to depict a dragon in full flight breathing fire but looked more like a child's drawing of a duck vomiting blood. Awakening somehow at home the next day, inside a fort I had constructed from seat cushions and a shower curtain, it took a four hour bath to remove the smell of damp arts-degree students and patchouli oil.

Quite a few things coming up this month, check them out below. As ever, send your poems and short stories to subs@nowthensheffield.com.

**PEACE IN THE PARK:
POETRY FUNDRAISER.**
23RD APRIL AT CAFÉ EURO.
7.30PM, £3.

A poetry fundraiser with open mic, music and featured performers. Come down and read a poem or two and raise some money for Sheffield's best yearly event.

VOX.
25TH APRIL AT THE RIVERSIDE CAFÉ.
6PM.
VOXSHEFFIELD.COM

Poetry, art and music.

WORD LIFE.
30TH APRIL AT THEATRE IN THE MILL,
BRADFORD.
8PM, £5.
TINYURL.COM/YHENA64

Word Life presents loop pedal wizard Denis Jones and poets Tim Turnbull, Mike Garry and Kayo Chingonyi.

**TEMPORARY AUTONOMOUS
ARTS IN SHEFFIELD.**
12TH-15TH MAY.

TAA began in London in 2001, bringing together artists, performers and musicians from the DIY underground. Since then, TAA exhibitions have spread to Bristol, Brighton, Edinburgh and Manchester. For more background of what TAA has achieved in the past visit randomartists.org.

The idea is to occupy a disused building for 4 days and 4 nights, ask artists to exhibit their work throughout the event and put on open mic nights, musicians, bands, film screenings, cabaret, a junk fashion show, a circus on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evening. If you are interested in exhibiting, playing or performing, get in touch on artandsoulcollective@hotmail.com or visit www.asksheffield.org.

SOFT.

The clatter of the city
sat in the room, it hung around
like meat hooks and drippings
of motor oil until somebody
shut the window;

He's gone

Is there such thing as a just war, Sam?

Fuck off

Anyway, I went out Friday...

Again that wheel
wound up, dominating the landscape,
craning its neck and dodging in and out
of view.
Scraping dishes emblazoned with it
the lads sat out smoking, looked up
at the afternoon etc.

Great shuddering in the snow the trucks
hummed by, greener than me; the driver
sat back in his seat, squinting
through the reflections in the ice picked
readymade tracks
melting salt like futuristic suns
into the hillside:

as their father did and as
their father did etc.

MATT SPENCE.

HOME.

Jackets, jeans, sneakers litter the room
A half-stubbed cigarette withers in the Sergeant Pepper ashtray
Books choke the bookcase
A Stalin book sits lonely beside a maze of academic litter
Freckled photographs line my wall
Surrounded by Orwell and Shakespeare quotes
A Pink Floyd poster, a backwards clock
An idle novel dances on a hi fi,
Kicking out a bassey Smiths song
'Ask me why and I'll spit in your eye'
An ocean of strangeness hides under my bed
Old broadsheets, birthday cards, a suitcase.
Old jeans droop from the wardrobe above stripy shirts, ties and
sweaters.
Empty shoe boxes and a river of laceless trainers
Emerging onto the carpet is an air freshener.

STEVE CLARKSON.

WORDLIFE.

SHEFFIELD POETICS.

COLLATED AND EDITED BY JOE KRISS.

**TWENTY THREE CHRISTMAS PUDDINGS.
OR:
A LARGE FLOCK OF STARLINGS.**

Tell me about yourself, I've never liked that question,
the real you, not the myth, shoe-shine, spin.
Which way shall I go? There's so many answers,
so here's the facts, the simple facts as I tell them -

Height, 6' 2", once uncurled from the sofa
Weight, 23 Christmas puddings or a large flock of starlings
Starsign, Tesco, conjunction House of Fraser
Religion, Born-again virgin, with outside bog

Food, 17,010 hot dinners, at roughly one a day,
4500 in a nosebag in front of the TV,
8200, mixed, with friends, family and/or Lincolnshire sausages,
4310, more intense, with love and best gravy by my Mum

(of course this doesn't include 810 slipped-in
fried egg sarnies, 1500 quick apple crumbles for comfort).
What else? About 140 haircuts, some I enjoyed,
180 pairs of shoes, mostly desert boots, sandals, slippers,

6 or 7 years, total time of drudge, sludge, donkey work,
socks on and off, I make it 34,300 rucklings,
my God! the patience, about 1600 poems, mostly daft,
and laughs, more laughs than socks off, thank the Lord,

and other things I haven't counted, trees climbed,
times in love
(= less than haircuts enjoyed, more than suits bought),
hospital visits, funerals, games of Scrabble
(I think the regular pleasures come to 56,810,

that's shower, shit, shag, shave all counted together)
and the Biggies, maybe 87 Golden Halo moments
- kisses, revelations, life understood etcetera,
cloudscapes stared at, several years and more,

then my own 2 children, much loved, with 2
different mothers, cars on fire, 1, very exciting,
and 16, 229 moments when my heart
skipped off the edge of the pavement

into the unknowable, like the night-life of stars,
misty, dark, uncountable, stuff I couldn't reckon with
for one reason or another, and quite often
it was another.

MATT BLACK.

GOODBYE SHEFFIELD.

IT'S ONLY YOUR BEST FRIENDS THAT'LL TELL YOU THAT YOU STINK.

THOMAS HOLME.

Dearest Sheffield,

It is with deep regret and utmost respect that I must hereby hand in my notice, for soon I must leave town in the cold amber morning sunlight. Sheffield - you've been good to me, I cannot thank you enough. I came to you a wreck of a man and I am leaving you an upstanding citizen of this tepid lunatic asylum we call Earth. Fear not Sheffield, I'll be returning in the month of May, sporting a French 'tache atop my lip with stories to regale you with no doubt.

This long winter we have all endured has left my lips reminiscent of the moon's dry crater filled surface, my skin has toughened to the thickness of a hippo's hide but most importantly of all, the blistering winds have blown all the cobwebs out of my once downtrodden and abused mind. The northern winter is a cruel beast, before I came here I was told that 'to endure such a battering is a bastion of achievement for anyone'. 'Pitble' I told them and I was wrong. Of course back then I had instilled in my heart the arrogance of the South of England. And yes, Sheffield, I am sad to be leaving you as the first days of spring encroach upon your fine hillsides; as the flowers bloom, the people become animated and the buildings seem that little bit less grey.

I'm starting to fear that I have lost my will to write with the edge that I pride myself for. Perhaps because I am happier than I have been for, oh...let's say a year, my withered brain has not the anger or repulsion to secrete nuggets of such harsh integral truths that focus on the negative and the sharp poignant shards that life seems to throw at us all from time to time. Or maybe this is simply another one of the little paranoid digressions that I seem to indulge in now and again. Regardless of the truth behind it all, you've helped me Sheffield and I hope I've done my best to give something back to you too. You can call on me at any time of the deepest darkest night for a favour. I'll be here for you, of that you can be sure.

I try to speak from the heart, no more, no less. I must admit, during the dulllest peaks of this particularly cold winter I nearly gave up faith. I wanted to kick down the walls and spit in the wind. As Papa Holme has always said to me (and his Papa Holme to him also): 'It's only your best friends that'll tell you that you stink, boy'. It's true, it really is - the friends who helped me to drag myself up here really are very special people. You know who you are, let this paragraph be a testament to you fine people who held my proverbial hair whilst I was sick in the gutter of life. You incredible few held me upright when I could not stand, ye who slapped me in the face when I needed it most. Thank you to you too. Reader, let me reiterate that I had not had much contact with the people I speak of for years, but when all the shit hit the fan these friends of friends appeared out of the blue yonder and gave selflessly to help a two-bit gibberish dribbling joker out.

Enough sloppiness and mindless sentimentality. Forgive me, I know it's sickly to see but it's something I feel and something that must be said. In summary, Sheffield, I have grown to love you. My affection for you has grown like a human ear grows on the back of a lab mouse. I am looking forward to enjoying the height of summer in your bountiful hills, worshipping the sky and dancing the long nights away and maybe, just maybe, making love under the softly spoken moonlight of the summer months. This love is dedicated to you Sheffield, I love you so. I'll write to you while I'm away and I'll see you when I return.

Until Then, I Remain,
Happy & Full of Sentiment,

Thomas Holme.



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Mojo Rising

Monthly 'First Thursday' 1st April - 8pm onwards - Free entry!
Playing the very best of deep soul. All 45 vinyl.

Crazy Crow

Fortnightly - Tuesday 6th/20th April - 9pm onwards - Free entry!
Live Irish music sessions in the bar.

Fade 2 Black

Saturday 10th April - 9pm onwards - Free Entry!
A night of live blues & rock music.

The Noise Upstairs

Monthly 'Second Wednesday' 14th April - 8:30pm onwards - Free entry!
An avant-garde free-improv jam night, visit thenoiseupstairs.com.

re:play

Monthly 'Third Thursday' 15th April - 7pm to close - Free entry!
A games night with a twist! Classic board games & Wii challenge.

Jack of Harps

Friday 16th April - 9pm onwards - Free Entry!
An acoustic duo playing Rhythm & Blues, Soul & Rock.

The Magi + Guests

Saturday 17th April - 8pm onwards - Free entry!
Diabolically debauched indie tunes. Support tbc.

Big John's Pub Quiz

Every Monday - 8:30pm onwards - 50p a play, bargain!
Multiple prizes + free buffet. Featured every Tuesday on BBC Breakfast Show.

Whippoorwill Presents...

Saturday 24th April - 8pm onwards - Free Entry!
Music from 'Serious Sam Bar rett' plus support (tbc).

For further information on upcoming events including Vox, Jam Jar open mic night, and weekend bands visit;
riversidesheffield.co.uk

'Starving Artist Programme'
WANTED: Musicians, Artists & Performers in residence for a **NEW** artist development programme. Contact Vic at The Riverside for further details.

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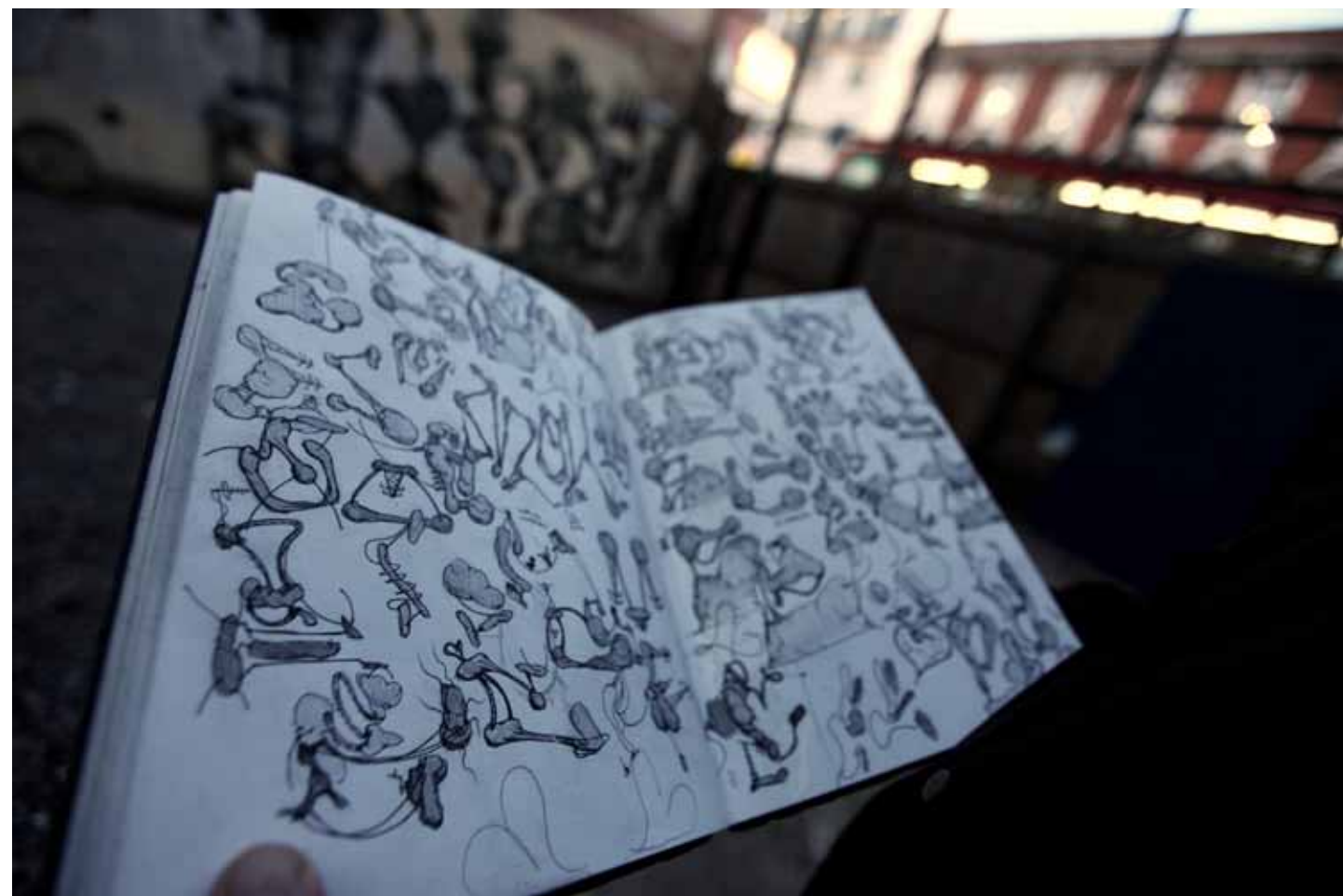
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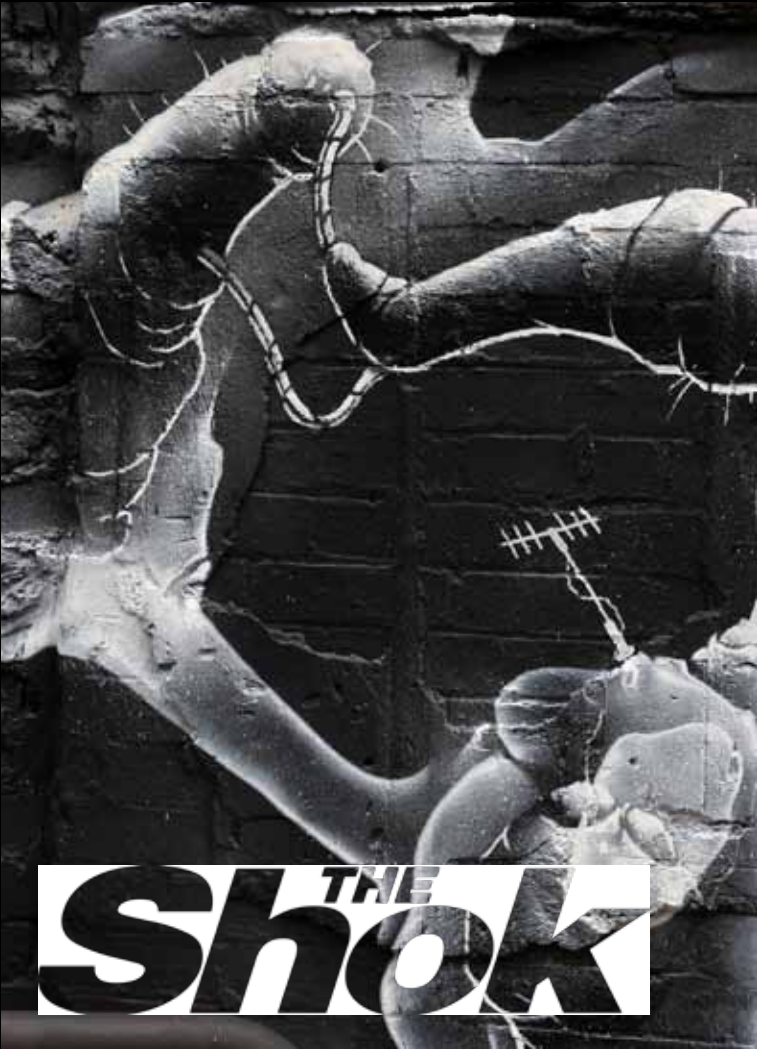
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OFFKEY AND ABSTRACT GRAF MERITOCRACY.
INTERVIEW BY MATT JONES.

SHOK ONE.



BASICS, PLEASE - WHAT STARTED YOU DRAWING?

It was something we always did in my house from when I was very small. We'd have that old school computer paper with the holes down the side and do big pictures on it. Actually I have my first drawing ever from before my first birthday. It's shit though, don't get excited.

My dad was always making things - he's a great artist but he'd never refer to himself as such. He's my biggest influence.

In 1984 I saw graffiti and hip hop for the first time and was instantly committed to it. The whole idea of graffiti made my hair stand on end. That you could be making art and breaking the law at the same time was perfect for me.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE THE PROCESS OF STARTING A NEW PIECE?

I'm constantly drawing and working out ideas mentally. I have a photographic memory and the gift of visualisation so I can look at pretty much anything I want to in my head and play around with it. Usually when I come to produce a work it's been fermenting it in my head for five years or more. When it comes to actually making something for other people to see I mostly just start and improvise the whole thing.

WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR INSPIRATION FROM?

Life. People.

I've always been fascinated by conflicts and transformation. Low/high culture, subculture/mainstream, how people get what they want from other people...that kind of thing.

TOOLS - WHAT DO YOU USE REGULARLY AND WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE?

Spraycan, marker, roller, silkscreen, drawing. I'm proficient on the computer too but I don't use it too much. I've produced some designer toys and experimented with sculpture.

WHAT OTHER ARTISTIC MEDIA HAVE HAD AN EFFECT ON YOUR ART?

Everything. You'd be surprised. I like finding great art in the least expected places. Gervais and Merchant do some great pieces under cover of mass entertainment, for example. The way they played with reality/hyperreality in Extras was really sophisticated.

HOW DO YOU SPEND YOUR DAYS?

Depends. At the moment I'm doing a lot of painting walls. I'll be travelling to various countries this year, painting at events etc.

Leisurewise, I'm a hardcore video gamer since 1980 or so, watch a lot of films and I love finding hip hop breaks. I used to drink about two litres of milk a day but I've cut down a lot. I'm going to the gym often to build up my stamina for doing the big wall art.

WHICH OF YOUR RECENT PIECES HAVE YOU ENJOYED MAKING THE MOST?

Working out how to reproduce my spraycan techniques in miniature with just a marker pen for my VHS pieces was a satisfying challenge. I'm excited about my X-ray style. I'm still finding new ways to push spraypaint as a medium. It surprises me.

HOW HAS YOUR ART EVOLVED OVER TIME?

It's become more conceptual over time...more translucent and layered, both in look and meaning. Hopefully it has become more original.

HOW HAS ART IN GENERAL CHANGED SINCE YOU STARTED?

The democratisation of media - especially via the internet - means that there are now a huge amount of visible artists, many of whom aren't really artists at all. More than ever before it's about who is good at publicity and being liked.

This is a very bad thing.

Graffiti writing as one example used to be a subculture thing, but now it's massively overexposed. There are a million 'casual bombers' here in London just destroying everything for the sake of it, no sense of rules.

I'm a staunch meritocrat - I believe in quality, originality, commitment. After all, you wouldn't want a cowboy builder in your house so why a cowboy artist?

WHAT ARE YOU CURRENTLY WORKING ON?

Colour is coming back for me after a long monochrome period.

Reinventing the frontage of the former headquarters of Stock Aitken and Waterman as an art space. Making a garden installation for one of my collectors - it's a bed of satirical flowers including Hoody plants and a Heinous Fry Trap; that's a fast food version of a Venus Fly Trap...

Turning VHS tape boxes into paintings - I'm working towards a solo show based on that idea. I'm pushing my use of light and shadow much further this year and generally working on my concepts focusing on my organic style and characters.

ANY TIPS ON HOW TO SURVIVE MAKING MONEY FROM YOUR ART? DO YOU FIND IT IMPORTANT?

Of course. It's always the equation of time for making/making a living. Unless you're a rich kid, of course.

Tips - know what you're worth and don't be afraid to walk away if it's not right. Remember that everyone is qualified to know whether they like a piece of art or not but very few people are qualified to know whether it's good or not - so always be the judge of your own work.

WHAT DO YOU DISLIKE IN ART?

That so many people want more of the same rather than fresh new ideas. There is such a glut of formulaic, soulless, marken-driven art these days. Commerce rewards an artist for copying themselves, which is the point at which you've fucked it basically.

Art should never be insincere.

WHAT MAKES YOU SMILE IN ART?

Originality. Non-conformism. Skills. Cunning. Wit. Bottle.

Art where you least expect to find it.

GOOD ADVICE YOU WISH YOU'D BEEN TOLD EARLIER?

Never trust anyone with new ideas. Make sure you get credit.

MATT JONES.

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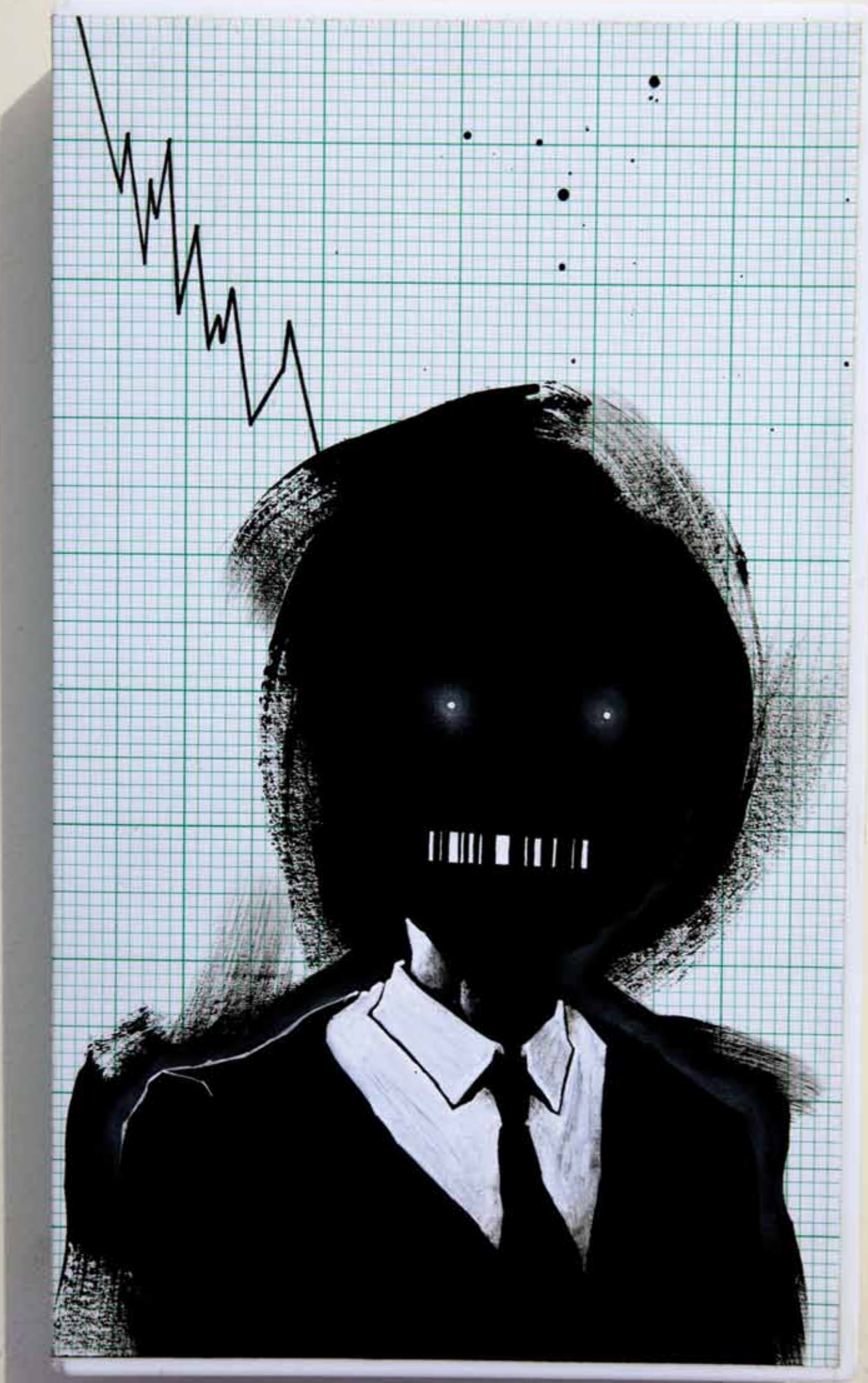


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SUCK MY LEFT ONE.

WOMEN IN MUSIC.

IMOGEN DECORDOVA.

WITHOUT MEANING TO GO ALL BIKINI KILL ON YO' ASSES, 'THE YEAR OF THE WOMAN IN MUSIC' CONCEPT IS A CONDESCENDING AND FRUSTRATING ONE.

Recently I've found myself digging my nails into the palm of my hands to stop myself from screaming every time the media© make a huge deal out of a significant amount of women (usually at least three or four) topping the nation's predictable charts or 'sweeping up' at awards ceremonies. They don't do any coverage of these rising stars until there is, what they consider to be, an influx of girls. After that the media© are licensed to manufacture some sort of phenomenon with headlines a bit like:

'HORMONAL NUCLEAR EXPLOSION SEES EXCESS OF TALENTED OESTROGEN PLAGUE THE NATION.'

If you are a lone female singer/songwriter with a little bit of a 'kooky side' ('kooky' also doubles up as meaning 'mad', 'spinster who doesn't want to get her tits out for the lads' or 'slapped on a bit of glitter in Claire's Accessories and got a merit in grade 1 piano'), there is an abundance of people for you to be compared to.

You can be A) Björk, B) PJ Harvey, C) Tori Amos or (for the exceptionally lucky) D) Kate Bush, because there's barely any other females in the industry. Right? Wrong. How often do you hear Jarboe on the Radio One playlist or Diamanda Galas mentioned in Heat?

The Big Five who the media© has gone apeshit over include Lady Gaga, Ellie Goulding, Florence and The Machine, Little Boots and La Roux (although the red quiffed one's presence in this list is debatable, because at the time of going to print we were still unsure whether she was eligible to be granted human status). MIA recently attacked a certain alt review site over their assumption that Diplo had written and produced pretty much all of Kala. Björk also dealt with the same problem of people alleging that she was incapable of doing all the hard graft without some male influence.

There's no denying that certain genres are male-centric - metal, hip hop and dubstep to name but a tiny few - but there is no justification for why you would need to sink deep into the underbelly of these scenes in order to detect any girls doing their bit. Most of these genuinely talented beings - Subeena, Ikonika and Julie Christmas to name but an even tinier few - are pushed to the fringes and kept well under the radar. Would it be fair to come to the cynical conclusion that they aren't going to cut the mustard unless they possess the visual accompaniment necessary to gain success? Is it really as simple as 'sex sells'?

Often when asked this hugely vague and often on closer inspection irrelevant question about being a 'woman in music', these artists find it awkward and embarrassing to answer. Rarely do they consider the idea in great depth and conclude: 'Hang about...I don't have a penis!' A lot of these artists probably feel reluctant to carry this gauntlet of femininity; it's pretty ridiculous to think such a small percentage of people should be granted the responsibility of representing the ambitions and limitations of women the world over. You can only imagine it's a huge burden that might give them complexes in the future.

Realistically these sexist award ceremonies mean nothing to anyone who values artistic expression, freedom and not being spoon fed mush by advertising conglomerates, and the sorts of rags and journalists guilty of committing these crimes deserve to be hung, drawn and quartered. It would be nice if for once they stopped thrusting the most mundane, laddy, geezer types in the pub into the forefront and focused their attention on the ladies producing superior work and putting a lot more effort into it.

Often it can be a good thing. Say a young girl has never considered making her own tunes or never wanted to delve into certain types of music for fear of ignorant buffoons labelling her 'a dyke' or 'tomboy'. She might come across one of these superlative articles about female musicians and it may well change her life forever. Perfect. But at the same time there should be equal amounts of publicity afforded to both sexes and it should be natural to be confronted by these girls as much as their male counterparts.

I won't pretend to understand the marketing figures or the depressing reasons for this promotional inequality, but I don't believe there needs to be a market for women and a market for men. Music magazines don't cater for men or women, pure and simple. Most women's magazines, however, do seem to provide you with trashworthy reviews of generic indie rock pop or bad r'n'b in a patronising attempt to second guess your listening patterns. Thanks Cosmopolitan, but you stick to your sex horoscopes and I'll get my musical news from a more reliable source.

It's definitely vital that we have this sense of solidarity and support each other, as women are often the first to cut each other down. These aforementioned 'girly' gossip magazines with their venomous celebrity commentary are in part to blame for the destructive self-effacement and judgmental behaviour some women have when it comes to success in certain areas.

Last month was International Women's month, and March 8th was International Women's day, celebrating economic, cultural and social achievements for the female of the species. Of course it's relevant and important to celebrate progression and development in all areas. I don't mean it's not fantastic to rejoice in the idiosyncrasies (if there are any) of the music - just don't be so surprised when you discover the creature that has produced this quality work has matching chromosomes. There are some amazing promotion agencies, magazines and female-focused organisations supporting women in arts and the media (top marks go to WAH magazine and Ladyfest). This celebration is necessary, but there is no need to believe that these women are superhuman and have got an unusual amount of testosterone floating around their bodies.

I'm not sure I want to venture into gender construction debate terrain as it's nothing new to rage over and is far more complex than I could hope to depict. I just ask not to be patronised and made to feel as if this is an exclusive of sorts, as if each female with an ounce of talent has a use by date tattooed onto the back of her neck and is somehow due to expire within the next few months. I shouldn't have to open mainstream culture magazines on a regular basis and keep asking 'Where all my talented bitches at?'



FOUR TET /
NATHAN FAKE.

18TH MARCH.
PLUG.

REVIEWER - BEN DOREY.

A THURSDAY EVENING IN MARCH BROUGHT TWO OF THE MOST EXCITING BOOKINGS SHEFFIELD’S SEEN TO THE PLUG. WHAT FOLLOWED WAS A MASTERCLASS IN THE POSSIBILITIES OF LIVE ELECTRONIC MUSIC SETS.

Nathan Fake is a relatively young figure amongst established producers in the progressive electronic scene, but he performs with the confident swagger of an old hand. Perhaps I should’ve expected as much from a man who has stated specifically that he is an electronic musician rather than a DJ. His live set drew heavily from the acid-tinged sound of his latest release **Hard Islands**, which combines the melodic sensibilities of his prog house background with razor sharp beats that sound like they’ve come straight from the Rephlex stable. Using Ableton Live in a way that pushes the boundaries of what’s currently being achieved with the program, Fake assembled each track from the rawest elements, blending recognisable parts from his records into completely new forms. The tweaked out sound of his recent releases is perfectly suited to being created live and the mastery he displayed over the musical landscapes he created was staggering, with live changes in tempo, pitch and even the timbre of individual notes and drum sounds unfolding at an intimidating pace. All in all, a very impressive display which those arriving late were fools for missing.

However, the man who undoubtedly drew the crowds to the night was Four Tet and it isn’t hard to see why. By breaking divides between electronic music and largely acoustic genres, notably jazz and folk, Hebden has widened his appeal beyond his initial fan base of electronica geeks dazzled by his Aphex remix ten years ago, and now probably has as many followers in the indie and alternative scenes. His releases and live sets have trended increasingly towards techno in recent years and the suitability of his loop-based productions for live remixing across this 4/4 backbone became very apparent in performance. Hebden doesn’t play music continuously in the style of a DJ set, but rather leaves gaps between tracks, so each one becomes an entity in itself. His live remixing is so comprehensive that for the first minute or so of each track it would be unrecognisable to all but the most devoted of listeners, but the complex development of layers always eventually led to the teasing in of one of the beautifully simple melodic lines that are the bread and butter of Four Tet, and hence unbridled euphoria from the fans.

An encore took things even further into a progressive Detroit direction and by the end many faces I usually see head nodding and chin stroking in Sheffield’s trendier bars were grinning inanely and flailing limbs around.

A fantastic demonstration of what is possible with a laptop and a bucket load of ingenuity. Don’t miss either of these artists if they return.

COLD CAVE /
DEAF TO VAN GOGH’S EAR.

22ND MARCH.
THE HARLEY.

REVIEWER - ALEX TURNER.

ON PAPER IT LOOKS LIKE SHEFFIELD HAS MASSIVELY LUCKED OUT WITH THIS ONE.

After spending 2009 copping sickening amounts of (mainly justified) hype and adulation from bloggers, music sellers and the press, Philadelphiaian “darkwave” synth-poppers Cold Cave are currently touring extensively in the UK. However, most of the dates are as support for the somewhat less thrilling Editors, whereas a convenient gap in this schedule enables them to appear as headliners at the Harley. As is often the case though, the fickle South Yorks public don’t seem to realise their good fortune, with only a few tens of punters making the show. It’s got to be said that openers Deaf To Van Gogh’s Ear don’t do that much to whet the appetite. Some appealing touches (pretty piano lines, bits of voguish but enjoyable Afrobeat guitar, a strangely Dead Kennedys-esque outbreak of surf-punk thrashing near the start) end up sunk by the band’s desire to splurge as many ideas as possible, all at the same time. These include math-y time-signatures, xylophone, keening vocal interludes and a trombone, with an end effect much like being forced to listen to someone’s entire record collection. Or as one audience member puts it, “a therapy session” being let loose.

By contrast Cold Cave keep things stripped and simple, as per their willfully bleak, primitive aesthetic. One blue light shines across the stage floor onto the drums, while frontman Wesley Eisold lurks in darkness, flanked by Jennifer Clavin and Dominick Farrow, behind angular panels of electronics resembling morgue slabs. Live, their songs are predictably even starker than the recorded versions, kicked along for the most part by a punishing, industrial bottom-end. Even the comparatively organic-sounding guitar line of ‘Love Comes Close’ turns out to be squeezed from a synth, while the delicately acerbic, Pulp-ish ‘Hello Rats’ gets treated to some ear-bleeding snares.

None of this can disguise Cold Cave’s pure pop hooks or the humour that offsets their mechanized doom and gloom. Eisold spends much of the set singing side-on to the floor, displaying his amazingly gaunt and wasted profile to maximum effect. It’s properly intense as well as being almost comic, and the drama is complete when the ultra-short set climaxes with ‘Theme From Tomorrowland’. The band head straight off stage without even the sniff of an encore and the venue’s (appropriately black) curtains are drawn on a riveting half hour or so.

FIRST AID KIT.

1ST MARCH.
BUNGALOWS AND BEARS.

REVIEWER - ED WOOLLEY.

IN THE SPIRIT OF GENEROSITY BUNGALOWS AND BEARS IS DOLLING OUT SHEFFIELD A FREE CHANCE TO CATCH SWEDISH FOLKSTERS FIRST AID KIT BEFORE THEIR STINT AT SOUTH BY SOUTH WEST LATER THIS MONTH. BUT FIRST UP, SUPPORTING THE SISTERS IS LEEDS-BASED SAM AIREY.

Sam’s sound is centred around his acoustic guitar, his rolling finger picking and open tunings tipping the hat to Bert Jansch and early Dylan. This mellow accompaniment is apt for his languid baritone, which warmly emotes a sense of wistfulness. The lyrics that accompany it are, however, more variable in quality. Sometimes his lines feel incongruous next to each other and occasionally his imagery feels a little trite. There are some great moments and opener ‘Row Upon Row’ is particularly special. However, his biggest challenge ahead will be an ability to stand out in the swamped field of singer-songwriters.

First Aid Kit come to the stage armed with songs from recently released long player **The Big Black & The Blue**. Their acoustic guitar and keyboard set up is backed up tonight by a drummer, but their songs are very much centred around their vocals. The sisters’ harmonising displays an almost telepathic synchronicity and creates a real richness in their sound. Their whimsical indie mixes folk, country and pop influences.

There is real precociousness here, their cherubic features belying their confidence, song writing and the maudlin nature of much of their material. They manage to create a magic moment by encouraging enough quiet to deliver one of their songs acapella, although initial indifference from those in the back booths threatens to create a temper tantrum from their lead singer.

However, their exuberance for their influences is quite charming, with them beseeching the audience to acquaint themselves with Gram Parsons’ solo output. Overall, their talent delivered a lovely evening.

SCREAMING MALDINI /
STARS AND SONS.

21ST FEBRUARY.
THE GRAPES.
REVIEWER - BEN ECKERSLEY.

FIRST UP ARE STARS AND SONS. LABEL MATES WITH SCREAMING MALDINI, THEY’VE TRAVELLED HERE FROM BRIGHTON FOR THEIR FIRST SHEFFIELD SHOW.

It doesn’t take long for them to win over the crowd, second song (and future single) ‘If It’s Good For Me’ being a highlight of the show. Led from the piano by singer Mike Lord, they play gloriously catchy pop songs deeply reminiscent of old-school Ben Folds Five. Definitely ones to watch.

Bison used to lay claim to being Sheffield’s orangest band. Seeing Screaming Maldini’s garish attire as they take to the stage of the Grapes, they’re unmistakably the pinkest. The upstairs room is as busy as I’ve ever seen it, and it’s hard to believe that this is only their fifth gig, so swift has been their rise to prominence. Recent signings to Oxford’s Alcopop Records, they’ve gathered us here to celebrate the launch of their debut EP **Screaming Maldini and the Kookaburra**. Maldini’s synth and trumpet-led songs tend to the playful and camp, with subject matter ranging from the secret conversations of woodland creatures to monkey/badger adultery. However, there’s substance behind the style, and the success of tonight’s gig is a testament to the zeal and commitment of singer Nick Cox, and more than anything to his sheer prowess as a songwriter.

The band seem a little nervous to start with, but soon relax into the show to deliver an impassioned and energetic performance – easily done with the vast amount of musical talent on the stage – typified by regular keyboardist Chris Noble, who leaps from French horn to synth to a last minute glockenspiel solo within the space of a single song. At one point, I’m sure I heard seven-part singing harmonies, but they find beauty in simplicity too; a highlight of the night being singer Gina Walters’ unaccompanied solo in new track ‘Albatross’. Stand out tracks of the night (refreshingly) are the newest – finisher ‘Four Hours From Now’ being particularly worthy of a mention with its bassy samba rhythms, and ‘Forever’ drawing the biggest reaction from the crowd.

Tonight is the first night of their debut UK tour, but they take with them all the strengths of the Sheffield music scene; their sense of fun, originality and experimentalism, alongside their humility and friendliness, seen at its best when they lead the crowd in singing Happy Birthday to trumpeter (and Renegade Brass Band stalwart) Andy Nesbitt. Catch them somewhere small while you can – on the strength of tonight their future success seems inevitable.

‘Foot to the floor, man’ says Nick, “it’s the future”.

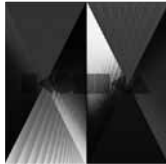
Viva la pink revolution.

SOUND.

IKONIKA. AUTECHRE.

POLAR BEAR. PLANK! JOY ORBISON.

IKONIKA. CONTACT, LOVE, WANT, HAVE.



HYPERDUB.
REVIEWER - JACK SCOURFIELD.

THERE'S A REASON WHY WADDINGTONS DON'T MAKE BOARD GAMES BASED AROUND BRITISH UNDERGROUND ELECTRONIC MUSIC LABELS.

Actually, there are several reasons - not least because it would be the most commercially ridiculous venture of all time - but also I've just looked it up and apparently Waddingtons doesn't actually exist anymore. But the reason I had in mind was that if they did, Hyperdub would be so firmly on top of the game that the packaging, contents and other labels would be completely crushed in to a disfigured pulp, making for a very disappointing present when unwrapped on Christmas morning.

For this is what Kode9's imprint is doing to the other labels at the moment, even without the help of a now-defunct games manufacturer. Hyperdub's releases over the past six years have continually changed the shape of British dubstep, challenging everyone else to keep up, and they seem to have a tendency to not release LPs unless they're of truly genre-defining standard. This time you can't even get past saying the artist's name before you've correctly labelled the release as 'iconic'.

Contact, Love, Want, Have follows two Burial albums, Kode9 & The Spaceape's **Memories of the Future** and King Midas Sound's **Waiting For You** on the shortlist of long players deemed worthy enough to be distributed on a Hyperdub compact disc, and this one sits comfortably alongside its predecessors in terms of excellence. Ever since the quirky bleeps of 'Please' first signalled her arrival in 2008, Ikonika has stood out as one of the most creative and forward-thinking producers around. And while her brilliant debut track isn't present on the album, the same unorthodox ingenuity most certainly is. The aforementioned quirky bleeps (if you'll pardon the technical jargon) are one of the underlying characteristics of Sara Abdel-Hamid's sound, around which she crafts tracks with influences ranging from dubstep to funky, garage and house.

Any puzzlement as to why she's chosen to leave off what could have been considered her best track is dispelled within the space of five minutes, as second track 'Idiot' is an absolutely brilliant piece of chiptune wonkiness. Tracks such as 'Yoshimitsu', 'Fish' and 'Sahara Michael' then proceed to merge g-funk synths with the bass and drum patterns of dubstep, while 'Continue?' sounds like Untrue-era Burial with an injected dose of groove. Other highlights are the soca-infused 'Psoriasis' and the early-Detroit techno stylings of 'They Are All Losing The War'. Or, as the Hyperdub press release calls it - in direct contradiction to how they've labelled the preview track file - 'We Are All Winning The War'. Maybe there's still hope for those other labels in the game after all.

AUTECHRE. OVERSTEPS.



WARP.
REVIEWER - BEN DOREY.

AUTECHRE'S NEW ALBUM SHOWCASES THEIR UNCANNY KNACK FOR ENTERING UNEXPLORED SONIC TERRITORY WHILST RETAINING A SOUND WHICH IS UNMISTAKABLY THEIR OWN.

The Rochdale duo have always had a stubborn autonomy from their Warp labelmates but, as with all their releases, this record is soaked in the sounds of their early interests - 80s hip hop, electro and acid. These small gems of analogue warmth, strong melody and danceable rhythms sit uneasily like frightened old men in music that as a whole is unforgivingly futuristic. Unsurprisingly, it does not provide a comfortable listening experience.

First track 'r ess' demonstrates an intention to disrupt usual modes of listening in electronic music, eschewing the normalisation of amplitude that has become almost standardly applied to some degree in all modern production. The first two minutes of the song emerge out of nothing in a slow crescendo of repeating motifs until gargantuan in size. This will no doubt induce a cacophony of clicking from ipod users as their clockwise tracing fingers are forced to double back, lest they perforate an eardrum. Hidden beneath this libidinous swell there are beautiful melodic sketches, setting a precedent for the rest of the album that similarly melds the familiar with the uncomfortably new.

'Known(1)' provides a striking example of this, beginning with an almost baroque contrapuntal arrangement for electric harpsichord that would be pleasant to listen to save for the slight detuning that accompanies each note's release. However, it is not long before this is joined by a stabbing and stuttering synth that, while still vaguely tracing around baroque sensibilities melodically, disrupts the rhythm in a disorientating manner. Somehow this piece and the next, both beatless, manage to be unexpectedly funky as well. Challenging and brilliant music that, as always, sounds like nothing else you've heard before.

Autechre haven't been neglecting their roots in dance and rhythm either. In tracks such as 'Treale' the hip hop influence of the outfit skulks around permanently in the background, the beat moving relentlessly forwards with the swagger of a Mancunian b-boy. There are also nods to the past in pad sounds reminiscent of early dance, but these are washed over several times with translucent layers of faltering static and discordant stabs before they reach us, preventing us from settling comfortably in their relative familiarity. On some of the other beat driven tracks like 'O=O' we don't even receive such comforts as stable rhythm - instead the beats ebb and flow organically with the rest of the music in some demonic and glitchy emulation of free form jazz.

Listening to this album in one sitting is like diving fathoms deep and then surfacing too fast. You may feel ill as much as you feel amazed. Acclimatisation is certainly necessary before you can delve deeper, but once you are ready it's like exploring a new continent - unnervingly familiar at moments but for the most part frightening, preconception-smashing and incredible.

POLAR BEAR. PEEPERS.



THE LEAF LABEL.
REVIEWER - FRED OXBY.

POLAR BEAR'S LAST ALBUM, HELD ON THE TIPS OF FINGERS, ROCKETED THE JAZZY QUINTET INTO THE LIMELIGHT BACK IN 2005, EARNING THEM A MERCURY NOMINATION AND MUCH CRITICAL ACCLAIM. NOW THEY'RE BACK...

Opening track 'Happy for You' is the rockiest on the album but immediately catches the ear with its wonderful melodic sax solo and driving rhythm. It is followed by another upbeat number, 'Bap Bap Bap', a gently swung and funky piece which although a little too short for my liking had my head nodding to its exotic harmony.

A favorite is 'Drunken Pharaoh', which has a wonderfully staggered rhythm and staccato sax stabs, all punctuated by hectic electronics. It's a hard listen, but a pleasant one.

Another standout track is 'The Love That Didn't Go Anywhere', providing a break from the intensity of the first few songs. It proves that although the band are pushing away from more conventional styles of jazz, they can still croon their way through delicate, beautiful and soulful numbers. The drums and bass take a back seat, allowing the saxophones and guitar to take the lead.

The musicianship on this record is really phenomenal. Leafcutter John's electronic soundscapes ooze texture into the tracks in a manner so compelling yet so subtle that it takes a few listens to fully appreciate. The paring of saxophonists Pete Wareham and Mark Lockheart works a treat as they come together to smash the main sax parts but also offer very different textures and ideas in their solo playing. This means that although they are often both playing tenor saxes, Peepers retains variety and intrigue throughout.

Drummer and band leader Seb Rochford has long been the talk of the British jazz community and plays with technical brilliance without ever overdosing on excessive fills. His playing reflects a love of classic acid jazz without fear of referencing folk, rock and world music.

As with their earlier work, Peepers combines flavours from all corners of the musical spectrum without ever truly leaving the band's home turf of avant-garde jazz. It is a sound that is very hard to pull off as it requires experimentation and challenge without becoming inaccessible. By and large Polar Bear have achieved this, although this may not be for everyone.

JOY ORBISON. THE SHREW WOULD HAVE CUSHIONED THE BLOW.

AUS MUSIC.
REVIEWER - JACK OPUS.

ALONG WITH FLOATING POINTS AND SBTRKT, JOY ORBISON IS IN MY OPINION ONE OF THE MOST PIONEERING BASS MUSIC ARCHITECTS IN THE UK TODAY.

Having earned huge hype before his first release 'Hyph Mngo' was even released, Joy Orbison can literally do no wrong in my eyes/ears.

This EP's stand-out track is 'So Debrobe'. I have listened to the radio rip online pushing 50 times and now it's finally got a release on the Aus Music label. Effortlessly blurring the gaps between garage, house and techno, it uses jungle bass tones, Detroit pads and shuffled beat edits to provide one of the most timeless pieces of music to be released so far this year. Title track 'The Shrew Would Have Cushioned The Blow' again demonstrates the obscene music making ability possessed by the one they call Joy Orbison.

Packed full of hook after hook and melody after melody throughout the whole EP, words are beyond me as how best to express this guy's talent. Basically, go and buy it.

New Flying Lotus, Skream, Zomby, Floating Points, Sbtrkt and Joy Orbison forthcoming soon. I'm going to be smiling a lot this year.

PLANK! PLANK!

AA RECORDINGS.
REVIEWER - IAN PENNINGTON.

WHEN IT COMES TO CRANKING UP THE REVERB AND OVERLOADING ON FX PEDALS, MANCHESTER'S AKOUSTIK ANARKHY RECORDINGS HAVE BECOME A RELIABLE SOURCE.

The Longcut and Nine Black Alps are amongst those championed through their club nights and compilations, and Cats In Paris' **Courtcase 2000** LP is an example of their recent recorded output.

However, as an appetiser, this debut EP's instrumentals provide mixed listening; mixed both in variety and aftertaste. The record's downfall is the perceived brevity of its individual parts. It's not necessarily the actual length of tracks, but the limited depth and appeal of their development that makes them appear shorter.

Opener 'La Luna' broadly fits the post rock mould; after a burst of bass, the underlying rhythm allows - or more encourages - my mind to wander to Primal Scream's 'Shoot Speed/Kill Light', despite PLANK!'s lead riff taking a more energetic direction. '1001 Nacht' follows a similar pattern of steady builds with industrial layers met by screaming guitar for a crescendo, and 'Phlaa' intertwines swirling electronics with laid back Pink Floydian vocal melody. 'Arse Nick' is perhaps the highlight as it unnerves with a dystopian bassline, but - at under 3 minutes - ends with a jolt before you feel ready for a conclusion.

DAEDALUS.

THE ENIGMATIC ALFRED DARLINGTON OF L.A.

INTERVIEW BY SAM WALBY.

LOS ANGELES IS HELD IN SUCH HIGH REGARD ON THIS SIDE OF THE ATLANTIC THESE DAYS THAT IT'S SOMETIMES HARD TO SEPARATE THE DIAMONDS FROM THE ROUGH.

It's all too easy to be cynical about these things, but there is certainly a growing army of modern producers throwing hip hop, dubstep, crunk and grime together in baseball capped post-Dilla revelry, armed with spacey synths and ever-so-slightly-out-of-time beats.

But the enigmatic Alfred Darlington does not fall under this category, not least because of his love of Victorian attire and Chinese uprisings. Producing under the name Daedelus since his first release in 2001, the man is a truly shape-shifting beast, paying little attention to genre trends or what's 'cool'. After all, what could be cooler than that?

His live sets have become world-famous due to his use of an electronic controller called the monome, while his production seems to offer a newly refined vision of weirdness on each new offering. With scores of releases on scores of labels already under his belt, Daedelus has just unleashed **Righteous Fists of Harmony** on Flying Lotus' Brainfeeder label, inspired by the Chinese Boxer Rebellion, of all things.

TELL US ABOUT THE INSPIRATION FOR RIGHTEOUS FISTS OF HARMONY AND HOW IT CAME ABOUT.

There is no need to make another record if you consider the every-year-long blizzard of releases. So many LPs have come and gone before - the sheer mountains of music out there are staggering and paralyzing. Then again, a strong (or strongly foolish) concept needs voice, and I have been quite lucky to hear that siren call often enough to stay busy in production. Righteous Fists of Harmony has a lot of reasons and thankfully supporters in the Brainfeeder family, not to mention the unfortunate events of the Boxer Rebellion of 1898-1901 as a blank canvas to underscore. It is the exact kind of hare-brained idea that demands another release to add to said mountains of madness.

MY INTRODUCTION TO YOUR MUSIC CAME THROUGH 2006'S DENIES THE DAYS DEMISE. I REMEMBER A KIND OF CONFUSION/FRUSTRATION AT TRYING TO PLACE IT IN A SPECIFIC GENRE. IT SEEMS LIKE, ALMOST MORE THAN OTHER MUSIC FANS, ELECTRONIC MUSIC FANS WANT TO CATEGORISE THINGS ALL THE TIME. IS THAT A RESPONSE YOU GET OFTEN?

Most electronic genres are ruled by strict tempo and rhythmic restrictions, so it is understandable your average fan of drum and bass (180bpm breakbeats) doesn't want to end up at a deep house (130bpm four four) warehouse rave. But inside the sanctuary of my home studio those restrictions are thrown out in favor of an honest appraisal of what the music asks for. Not to sound all insane, but I do believe in letting the notes fight it out among themselves, the samples play nicely with one another. The end product is one of as little interference. That's my sound. Or my non-sound, I guess...

ARE YOU STILL USING THE MONOME IN LIVE PERFORMANCES? DO YOU EVER USE IT IN THE STUDIO DURING COMPOSITION?

The Monome is my live performance, although I feel temptation towards other options as I see brilliant electronic performers like Nosaj Thing, Tim Exile and Dorian Concept. For the time being and the foreseeable future the Monome is fully satiating. Not so much in the studio however, yet, yet, yet.

I ONCE DID AN INTERVIEW WITH SOMEONE WHO SAID THEY WERE SUSPICIOUS OF LIVE SETS BY LAPTOP MUSICIANS BECAUSE THEY MIGHT BE CHECKING THEIR EMAILS OR PLAYING SOLITAIRE. WAS YOUR USE OF THE MONOME A DIRECT RESPONSE THIS?

I find it a very good answer to the dilemma of performance that is computer assisted. Controllers are more controlling (for lack of a better word) nowadays and allow so much hands on, but tend to hide the process they are enabling. The Monome is at once a blank operation to suit the player but also, as it lights and directly operates with button presses, I believe it to be quite instrumental (again lacking a better term).



HAVE YOU EVER CHECKED YOUR EMAILS DURING A GIG...? OR PLAYED SOLITAIRE?

Never such a moment. My full attention is on the night at hand. I am simply flabbergasted that you would even ask! We certainly do live in such times, however, with plenty of people twittering from the stage they are DJing from...

YOUR LAST RELEASE WAS A SPLIT WITH JOGGER ON THE FRIENDS OF FRIENDS LABEL. TELL US A BIT ABOUT THAT PROJECT.

Jogger are quite good friends and the label's mandate, as the name suggests, is to pick a friend to introduce with every EP. It is a diverse release but stronger for it.

HAVE YOU RELEASED ON SO MANY DIFFERENT LABELS OUT OF NECESSITY OR CHOICE? DO YOU EVER WORRY YOUR NEWEST CREATION WILL BE SO FAR-OUT THAT NO-ONE WILL BE INTERESTED IN RELEASING IT?

Every label has its own-ness, its own reasons for being, and with all the labels I've turned to I hope I've been a part of that particular musical tradition-in-the-making. As for the second half of your question, all of my records have been rejected by someone, but let's just say blinders are quite helpful, as well as a little faith that this moment of releasing luck will ever happen again. But that wasn't the reason for doing this in the first place - it is a necessity to make music, not an option.

LOS ANGELES HAS A KIND OF COOL, ROMANTIC MYSTIQUE ABOUT IT FOR A LOT OF BRITS - ESPECIALLY WITH PEOPLE LIKE FLYING LOTUS APPEALING TO WIDE AUDIENCES OVER HERE. WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT THE MUSIC COMING FROM LA AT THE MOMENT AND DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF PART OF IT ALL?

I don't know if I count as part of the new crop of rising talents, but they are all friends, some quite dear. And they are fiercely bright stars. There are some contradictions in Los Angeles that are quite powerful - the isolation, the flood light of attention and competition, as well as a wish to lift up rather than put down. Once the attention moves on to the next where and why Los Angeles will still be cranking out awesomeness as it has for long years.

'ORDER OF THE GOLDEN DAWN' FROM THE NEW EP SOUNDS LIKE A LONG LOST TRACK. DO YOU HAVE ANY PLANS TO RELEASE ANOTHER RECORD WITH YOUR WIFE UNDER THAT NAME?

The Long Lost is not as the name would suggest. We are always at work. 'Order of the Golden Dawn' was more my own track, because Laura Darlington (my co-conspirator and wife) didn't do the production as she would have in our work under that moniker. Look out for more soothing sad sounds soon.

HOW DID YOUR SHOW AT THE TUESDAY CLUB IN SHEFFIELD GO LAST MONTH?

Fantastic! But I don't kiss and tell. Starkey and Mary Anne Hobbs are incredible talents.

YOUR SOUND STRIKES ME AS SOMETHING APPROACHING UNIQUE. WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO ASPIRING PRODUCERS TRYING TO MAKE THEIR OWN STAMP ON MUSIC?

You can't escape being yourself, so surrender to that prison and make the walls beautiful. The moment you do it for someone else, rather than being inspired by them, become a dentist or a bond trader. You'll be happier in the long run.

WHAT MUSIC IS MAKING YOU SMILE AT THE MOMENT?

Lists of lists of talented producers and endless songs. We live in the golden age. The promised age is here and hear. It is incredible right now. I am adrift in all-day inspiration and admiration.

ANYTHING ELSE TO ADD?

Thank you for the time taken!

SAM WALBY
talking to
DAEDELUS.

6 MUSIC.

WHY WE SHOULD SAVE IT.

SPIN.

STIRRING FROM MY SLUMBER I CAN HEAR LAUREN LAVERNE’S VOICE BLARING ROUND MY ROOM. MOST MORNINGS WHEN I WAKE UP TO MY ALARM I HAVE A SMILE ON MY FACE. NOT THIS ONE.

“This is probably not the easiest of days for us. Probably not the easiest day to be on the radio, to be honest with you, especially not this station, which I love with all my heart. So thank you very much for all your kind words.”

Not quite sure what was going on, but realising it was serious I turned on my computer and checked the BBC news page. I was totally shocked at what those big ominous black letters said: “BBC 6 Music and Asian Network face axe in shake-up”.

6 Music has been my radio station of choice now for the last six years. There are even times where I leave it on all day. Unlike on other radio stations, you’re not bombarded with advertisements, there are no annoying presenters and all the music is incredible.

It was one of the first BBC digital stations launched in 2002. It describes itself as a station that “brings together the cutting edge of today and the iconic and groundbreaking music of the past 40 years”. It has a weekly audience of nearly 700,000 people, but according to the review this is “relatively few unique listeners”.

That’s really my main point of concern. Where else on the radio can you escape the strictly chart-based playlists? Or hearing the same song five times in an afternoon? The sad answer is nowhere. Commercial radio would not be able to support the new and old music played on the station. These dedicated and loyal listeners will be losing more than just a radio station.

The main difference between BBC 6 and other stations is that the presenters, the bands and the listeners love music more than money.

Phil Jupitus, who used to present the breakfast show, spoke out: “The end of 6 Music at this moment in the BBC’s history is not only an act of cultural vandalism - it’s also an affront to the memory of John Peel.”

But it’s not over yet. These cuts are still in the proposal stages. BBC Trust Chairman Sir Michael Lyons said there would be a rethink if there was a big enough public response.

So if you feel passionately about the likes of Ke\$ha and Lady Gaga not replacing Pink Floyd and the Strange Boys then there are a few things you can do to help.

- 1. Join the Save BBC 6 Music Facebook group.
- 2. Sign the petition - petition.fm/petitions/6musicasiannet/1000
- 3. E-mail the BBC on srconsultation@bbc.co.uk or trust.enquiries@bbc.co.uk.
- 4. Visit love6music.com and helpsave6music.com.

6 Music keeps the spirit of broadcasters like John Peel alive and for new artists to lose this station would be a great shame.
- David Bowie.

On a personal level, I believe that shutting 6 Music would be disastrous for the British music scene and alternative music from further afield. There is so much music being played every week on 6 that simply doesn’t get played anywhere else. Losing it would be unthinkable.
- Steve Lamacq.

It was almost like until 6 Music came along the BBC were saying: “I’m terribly sorry but if you like alternative music then you’ll just have to wait until 7pm. We’ve got Westlife and Girls Aloud singles to play.”
- Phil Jupitus.



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£5 adv

10 SATURDAY

DQ: THREADS

LITTLE LOST DAVID & DEANO TAKEOVER

10.30pm – 3:30am

£3 b4 12 / £5 after

15 THURSDAY

DQ: GEEKS (LAUNCH NIGHT)

TEENAGERS IN TOKYO (LIVE)

RESIDENT DJS

10.30pm – 3:30am

16 FRIDAY

DQ: SUCKERPUNCH

MJ COLE

MR SHANKS

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10.30pm – late

£6 adv / more otd

17 SATURDAY

DQ: THREADS

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22 THURSDAY

DQ: GEEKS

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RESIDENT DJS

10pm – late

£5 adv / more otd

23 FRIDAY

DQ: KROOKED

BOOGALOO CREW

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10.30pm – 3:30am

£3 b4 12 / £5 after

24 SATURDAY

DQ: THREADS

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29 THURSDAY

DQ: GEEKS

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PAGE 46.

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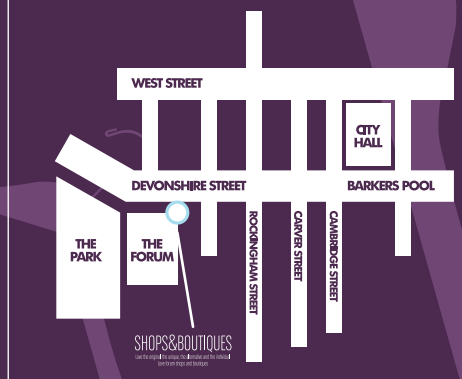
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SMALL SCREEN: MAD MEN & LOST. TRANSCENDING THE MEDIUM.

“I HAVE A CONFESSION TO MAKE... I DON’T REALLY WATCH TV.”

Those were not - but should've been – my very first words when I faced a couple of TV execs to pitch them a project a few months ago. This would've made their desperate attempt to pigeon-hole me less embarrassing for everyone involved, but the fact that I was really pitching something that ultimately belongs to the big screen highlighted something else.

Upon my arrival in England (already over a decade ago), I had what qualifies as the biggest culture shock of them all: TV overrides everything. Even on a Film Studies course, the deeper you would go into technical knowledge, the more you were invited to lean towards TV drama.

I found that the differentiation between the two was practically null and, coming from a country where Cinema is an autonomous elitist art form above all else, I was bewildered to say the least. British Cinema proved to be not just historically indebted but, in many ways, derivative of and dependent of TV. Therefore my inability to relate to it as an artist was almost instantaneous and remains to various degrees unaltered. My disenchantment aside, this made me look at things differently.

“The reason why we are as we are as a people is because we have the best TV in the world,” the great late JG Ballard put it when elaborating upon his love-hate relationship with the British. It's indeed an entire culture reliant on the public service which dutifully delivers information, trends and domestically sustains dreams and aspirations. The fact that British Cinema, with all its tradition of social realism, delivers an equally heavy dosage of national pride and constant cultural reaffirmation, contributes to my attention being turned elsewhere.

In the case of the small screen, quality has hence consistently come from overseas in the last few years and precisely from that other culture which also reaffirms itself at each step and bears such unquestionable influence on the British: the USA. Far from being an expert (I don't watch TV, after all), I'd like to distil two shows – Mad Men and Lost - from all the other popular and successful American exports. By doing so I intend to explore the ways in which they transcend their medium and hope to attain a truthful glimpse of what the difference in function between film and TV is.

With the memory of David Lynch's TV series Twin Peaks (which was crowned with a hugely underrated feature-length prequel) fading each day, I need to throw myself back to one certain daytime repeat broadcast of Little House on the Prairie, in which I was perplexed to find aesthetics and camera work worthy of Stanley Kubrick. That particular episode was directed by lead actor Michael Landon and I seemed to be the only one intrigued by it back then.

Interestingly enough, the most recent episode of ABC's Lost that I've watched featured a scene in which one of its key characters is seen watching precisely the above-mentioned show on TV. Clearly there to represent a certain kind of nostalgia for a time in which all things were earnest and simple, Little House on the Prairie now belongs to a half-remembered realm that informed my generation's make-up. Needless to say, Lost taps into this and much more with its intricate plot connections which somewhat manage to remain coherent. It speaks to our collective TV memories from childhood and teenage years and is informed by mythology that goes way beyond the small screen format, retaining at the same time a remarkable authenticity. But the greatest achievement of Lost is how even the most outlandish narrative twists are above all character-driven.

The structure of each episode in every season continues to be impressively simple; we focus on one character at a time, interspersing the action with revealing flashbacks which become more and more about their fatalistic presence on the island where their plane crashed. That said, as the series evolved, eventually these flashbacks turned into flashforwards that signalled towards actual time-travelling and, by now, they became a parallel reality in which their original flight reached its destination safely. This degree of narrative sophistication is, in my opinion, a gem and privilege to enjoy – contrary to the default spoon-feeding of information and tendency to tell us what to think that television (but not only) is most guilty of.

Playing on a nostalgia of a different flavour, AMC's Emmy and Golden Globe-winning series Mad Men revisits an era we all feel connected with whether we lived through it or not; the 1960s. To begin with, it takes a similar stance to the British reaffirmation of its own cultural values, but not unlike the aforementioned Ballard's literary output, it deconstructs them by exposing what lurks beneath the surface of normality.

More than this, the entire advertising agency set-up unearths the very foundations on which the influence of the American culture has based itself. It's not just talking about America - it's elucidating us about the way their society shaped ours.

When Conrad Hilton commissions an advertising campaign for his (still young) empire of hotels and says “It's my purpose in life to bring America to the world - whether they like it or not,” we know what was to come. When he adds that “we are a force of good because we have God” we can't help feeling a certain discomfort...

And these are just simple examples of the perfect balance the show finds between fictional content and historical accuracy, whilst never setting aside a critical gaze. I dare say this is the best thing I've ever seen on TV. Mad Men reaches unprecedented levels of psychological depth and often a kind of raw existentialism that puts most current cinematic outputs to shame. Both these aspects are mostly enabled by utterly flawless acting, which is in perfect synch with the overall subtle approach and stark sobriety.

In concept at least, Cinema is something that you have to purposefully seek, to go out of your way to watch. Unmediated as it seems, TV enters your home and tells you things. The information needs to be, to a greater degree, clear and certainly captivating. Paradoxically, somehow, TV dramatic content is at its best when it conveys Cinematic flair – a quality that both Lost and Mad Men amply possess while never for a moment forgetting to acknowledge the privilege it is to respect us as an audience.

**JOÃO PAULO SIMÕES IS A PORTUGUESE FILMMAKER LIVING
AND WORKING INDEPENDENTLY IN SHEFFIELD – HIS WORKS
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PSYCHO. (1960) DIRECTOR - ALFRED HITCHCOCK. REVIEWER – OWEN COGAN.

FIFTY YEARS AFTER ITS ORIGINAL RELEASE, ALFRED HITCHCOCK’S PSYCHO FINDS ITS WAY BACK ONTO THE BIG SCREEN COURTESY OF THE SHOWROOM.

Psycho was, in its time, a revolutionary piece of filmmaking. The masterly way in which Hitchcock combines the atmosphere of tense horror with the psychological complexity and darkly humorous nature of his characters creates a film that lulls you into its world and then kicks you in the face with its minimal but striking blasts of shudder-inducing depravity.

Marion Crane, a company secretary, steals \$40,000 of her employer's money and flees to a motel which, since the highway was relocated, nobody visits anymore. There she meets Norman Bates, a strange, withdrawn but charming character who appears to be suffering from the abuse of a domineering, mentally ill mother. Back at home Marion's family, friends and employer notice her absence and each begins a search for her, leading them to the motel and to the Bates family.

Hitchcock puts most of his effort into building atmosphere and tension. This is done with great success and is highly involving. The modern impatient viewer - brought up on films that imitate Hitchcock's tension but throw in more horror, more shock, and more gruesome brutality - might find Psycho's subtlety a little tame. Having said that, the modern viewer should chill out, stop rattling around in their over-stimulated mind and let themselves sink into the highly crafted atmosphere.

Psycho is about the horror of madness. It is deeply disturbing because of its realism. The world the audience is made to inhabit is a believably mundane one and the nauseating madness the viewer encounters in this world doesn't inspire disbelief because it seems psychologically feasible. The film is genuinely scary because we believe in this madness.

In this visually astonishing, sexy, disturbing film Hitchcock explores the deepest fear and biggest curiosity of modern civilization: insanity. He does so with style, humour and intelligence, and there are also moments in this film that are still, even to the modern desensitised viewer, pretty damn shocking.

Psycho is running at the Showroom Cinema from Friday 16th April.





FANCIE.
388 SHARROWVALE RD.
(& WINTER GARDENS!)
FANCIE.CO.UK

THE STORY OF FANCIE IS SOMETHING OF A FAIRYTALE...

So many of us have been in a job that caused our souls to slowly percolate out of our behinds and left us yearning for the freedom to follow our passions. For so many of us this is an impossibility, with bills and rent to pay. The inertia kills the dream. This is what makes Amanda Perry's adventure into cakery so magical.

Having started out with a big idea and a genuine love of cake, Amanda began selling her wares at local vintage fairs. So well received were they that she finally took the plunge and opened a deliciously quaint tea and cake (or rather more cake and tea in this case) shop in the haven of independent trade that is Sharrow Vale Road.

Though the then ubiquitous alliteration 'credit crunch' was ringing in everyone's ears, and to most people the very notion of striking out alone was utterly unthinkable, Amanda had a plan...

The idea was that while the financial downturn made most of us rule out the possibility of new cars, holidays, even shoes or clothes we didn't desperately need, it is the small, affordable indulgences that make us feel that little less bleak and a little more hopeful. The plan worked. Big time.

It's been just one year since the Fancie dream was realised in Sharrow, and such is the demand for these little cups of delight that we are ecstatic to announce that you will now be able to pop in to the new shop in the beautiful (and weather proof) Winter Gardens. Yay!

The fact that after only twelve months this wee venture is proving so fruitful is frankly astounding and testament to both the vision and dedication of Amanda and her team. Knowing just how Sheffield-centric and independently minded she is, there's no fear of any corporate takeover on the horizon either.

We like cake. We like Fancie even more.

MAD COW.
50 CHAPEL WALK.

MAD COW IS THE LATEST ADDITION TO THE FAMILY OF SHOPS TO BE FOUND ALONG THE HISTORIC CHAPEL WALK IN TOWN.

It is a family-run business that has been operating for three years now and has finally decided to bring its unique brand of milky goodness to us Sheffield folk. Hazzarr!

Having a real love of good milkshakes coupled with an eye for design and a considerable dose of business acumen, owner Brad has all the right ingredients for success. Being proper milkshake lovers, the team decided there were quite probably a good few people out there looking for more than your standard strawberry, chocolate and banana flavours and so embarked on the Mad Cow mission.

The choice of flavours is staggering, with over 200 on the menu and an additional 100 'specials' to choose from daily. They also offer a 'create your own' option, allowing you to go mad (sorry) and build your shake from scratch, with a 'maddest shake of the day' competition held every day. There are actually over a million possible combinations for you to be going at so we recommend you check out the menu beforehand to avoid spending your entire lunch break boggling at the ingredients list.

Brad is currently in the process of establishing contact with local farmers in his new city, enabling him to support local industry and keep that footprint small, something we obviously have a great deal of respect for.

It's abundantly clear that this place is a thick slice of silly fun done right, with a crew that love what they do as well as knowing how to sustain it, and so will hopefully buck the trend of shops coming and going at Chapel Walk of late.

Spring is in the air, sun in the sky, but for those nippy days that remain you have the option of any flavour served hot. The rice pudding flavour drunk warm is a clear winner.

REAL TIME MUSIC.
WEST ONE PLAZA. 8 FITZWILLIAM ST.
REALTIMEMUSIC.CO.UK

You'll find this little corker of a music shop next to bar 23 in the Plaza in town, and to any musicians reading this that don't already know it, it's well worth a butchers.

Real Time started out over in Chesterfield and having made a great name for themselves there, are now making waves in good ol' Sheffers with a sweet range of guitars, amps, drum tackle and all things rockin' at net-beating prices.

Though they are the only stockists of Gibson and Epiphone in Sheffield, as well as the only shop to sell proper drumming equipment in ten miles of the city centre, the best thing about this place is the attitude of the staff. Down to earth, informed and relaxed, owner Mark is a million miles from the standard Jimmy Page wannabe who's more interested in showing off his fretting than which guitar is for you. Bob in and see for yourself.

TWO STEPS.
249 SHARROWVALE ROAD.
0114 266 5694

Once immortalised in song by legendary Sheffield skifflers the Carol-Anne Showband, Two Steps is easily the best chippy in the world. Probably. If that sounds a little OTT then what I would say with full conviction is that it is the only chippy I would actually cross the city to frequent. No small accolade from a man who resents a trip to the local corner shop.

All you'd hope for is delivered with great consistency - golden batter, fluffy chips and succulent fish fillets, served hot and fresh daily, with the awesome mini-fish served with chips and peas (or curry sauce) for a lip-smacking £1.90. The perfect midday meal that won't have you falling asleep on the job.

Two Steps has seen off two world wars and countless recessions. I reckon once you've been you'll see why.

SAVILLES.
19 CHAPEL WALK. S1 2PD.

You know you're laughing when you're opening your fourth salon in these uncertain times, which is exactly what owners Simon and Joth have done with Savilles Barbers down Chapel Walk.

These chaps have been styling the city for a solid decade now and have well established places across the city to cater for all blokes' tastes and budgets. This latest addition to the family continues the trend perfectly.

Immaculately decorated and offering the full hot wet shave, Savilles is for the gent about town and the passing everyman alike. What you certainly won't get here is a conveyor belt hair cut, with proper care taken as the amiable chat flows nicely.

Having recently performed the previously impossible feat of transforming this reviewer from scruffy urchin to debonair dandy, I'd strongly recommend a visit.

FAVOURITES.
OUR PICK OF THE BUNCH.

THE RIVERSIDE.
1 MOWBRAY STREET, S3 8EN.
0114 272 4633 / RIVERSIDESHEFFIELD.CO.UK

The Riverside is a great venue for live music, art, poetry, theatre and quality beers. They regularly offer up an eclectic mix of programming from seasoned pros to new and emerging artists.

Premier among these events and much loved by Now Then is Vox Sheffield, a music and arts event on the last Sunday of every month that raises awareness of local and global causes alike. Check out voxsheffield.com for more details.

From April 2nd, the Riverside has its kitchen back up and running, serving Mediterranean influenced culinary delights produced fresh and local - just how we like it. Initial service commences Friday and Saturday evenings 5-8pm & Saturday lunch time 12-3pm.

Look out for the full menu starting from May 3rd, including weekday lunches and Sunday dinners.

BUCA DI BRAGAZZI.
ABBEYDALE ROAD.
THURS - SAT (BOOKINGS FROM 6PM).
07830104219 / 07814188300.

Some of you will be aware of the glory that is a Bragazzi's cup of coffee and sandwich. Mouthwatering doesn't even cover it, so for those of you who are in the know (and also for those who soon will be), you should all be aware of Buca di Bragazzi, a new restaurant venture from the same team with the same brand of quality and authenticity.

Buca di Bragazzi is in its fledgling stages and is open for food Thursday to Saturday from 6pm. It is also currently unlicensed so feel free to bring your own beverage of choice. We visited ourselves the other week and were thoroughly impressed. A comfortable atmosphere, quality service, locally sourced ingredients and a down to earth cooking style with a flourish.

PEACE IN THE PARK
FUNDRAISING EVENTS HAPPENING NOW.
WEB.PEACEINTHEPARK.ORG.UK

Each year Peace in the Park arrives free to the public. Each year it is better than the last, and each year it is acknowledged as the city's best attempt at a day festival. This year it is at Ponderosa Park on Saturday 12th June from about midday. You'll find homegrown music, food, local traders and good times.

As important as the day, however, is its fundraising events. These range from sit down meals in community centres right through to live music events all over the city. Please get down to them and support your local festival by paying entry and having a great time in exchange. This is not an indie-fed, corporate chunk of high energy fashion - it is a festival for all tastes borne out of the hard work and charitable nature of those behind it.

Check out the website address above for more details on PITP fundraising events.





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| 1. PURPLE MONKEY . | 14. ETHIO CUBANO. | 27. SHARROW LAUNDRETTE. |
| 2. RIVERSIDE CAFE. | 15. THE CRUCIBLE THEATRE. | 28. JH MANN. |
| 3. BEANIES. | 16. THE LEADMILL. | 29. CAFE EURO. |
| 4. THE HARLEY. | 17. THE SHOWROOM/WORKSTATION. | 30. G+L SERVICES. |
| 5. SOYO. | 18. COCOA. | 31. THE CREMORNE. |
| 6. THOU ART. | 19. KUJI. | 32. INK EXPRESS. |
| 7. REAL TIME MUSIC. | 20. POMONA. | 33. THE OLD SWEETSHOP. |
| 8. RARE AND RACY. | 21. FANCIE. | |
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| 10. GOLDEN HARVEST. | 23. THE MOGUL ROOM. | |
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